

THIS NUMBER CONTAINS

# "DOUGLAS DUANE"

By EDGAR FAWCETT, author of "A Gentleman of Leisure," etc.

COMPLETE

APRIL, 1887

# LIPPINCOTT'S

## MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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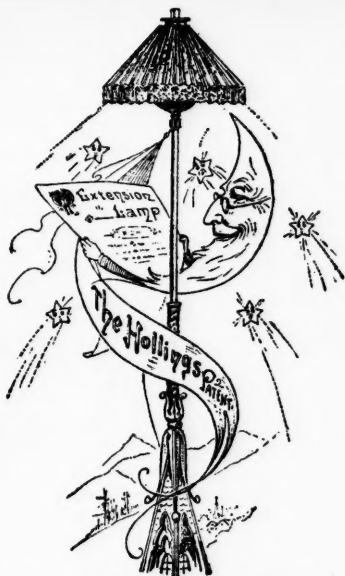
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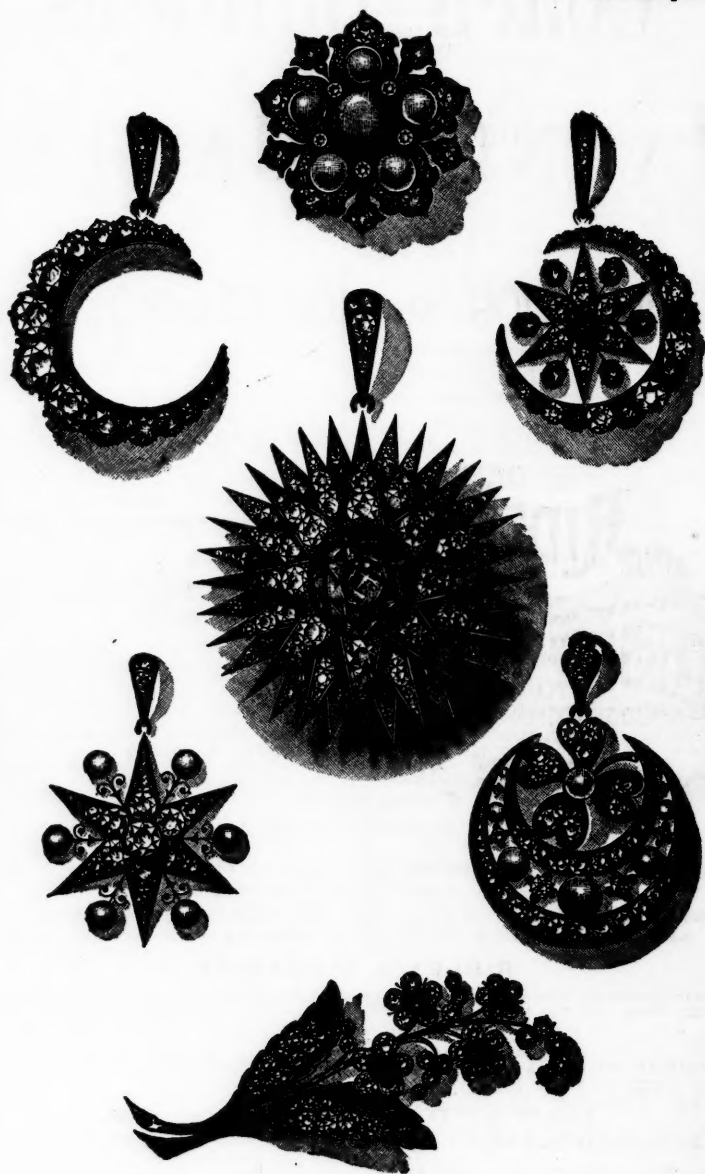
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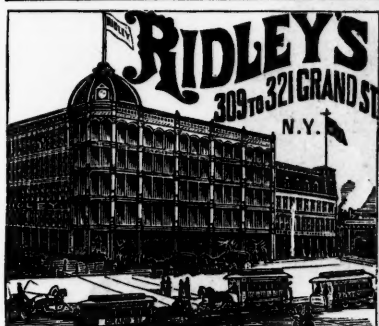


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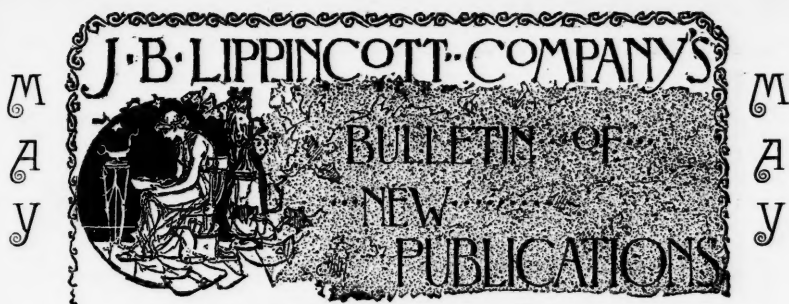


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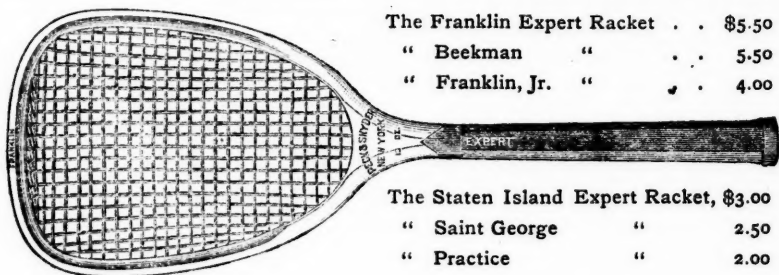
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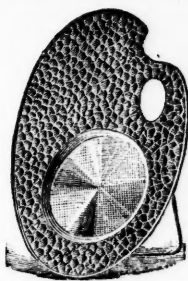
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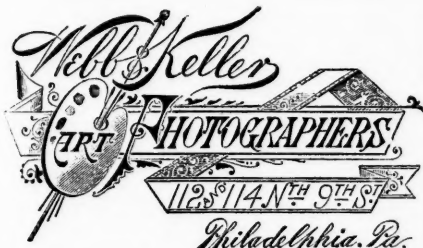
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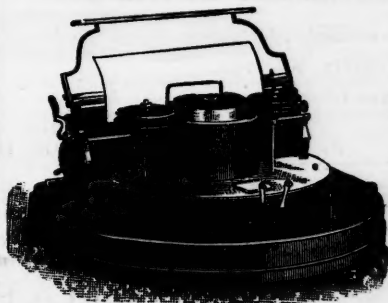
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# LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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APRIL, 1887.

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DOUGLAS DUANE.

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## THE PROLOGUE.



### I.

LAMPS had begun to flicker in the wintry dusk. They gleamed with a flaring and very earthy mimicry of the first earlier stars which already had orbled clean little disks of silver above the city's numberless roofs. It was December, and though as yet slight snow had fallen with the dying year, an icy breath made the quick gusts cut like blades. The broad boulevard of lower Second Avenue gleamed quiet enough, for the hour that brings weary swarms of laboring-folk home from shops and factories across to the big East districts where so many of their dingy dwellings are huddled together, had not yet arrived. But the six-o'clock whistle soon sent its loud shriek, with eerie effect, to pierce the stillness of even this drowsy quarter. And then, in what seemed a strangely brief interval, the shabby throngs began pushing their way from a few of the near side-streets.

Varied indeed were the countless forms and faces for any eye that might care to look on them with more than indifferent heed. But none the less a universal sombreness and rustiness enfolded them in one visible fellowship of toil. Some of the men, women, girls or lads wore merry and smiling visages; others told of worriment and fatigue as plainly by their pallor and spareness as by the halting drag of their gait. The spacious avenue was suddenly alive with their dim swarms. Not a few, perhaps, were going hungry to boards where bread would greet them in no plenty and meat was yet more scarce. Along these same pavements, morning after morning and evening after evening, has passed for years this dreary procession, forever decimated by death yet forever swollen by fresh living recruits. It is a far more piteous parade than if mendicancy and not toil were the meaning of it; for here we

may guess what bitter vetoes poverty can lay upon human struggle—how large is the doom that bows and even crushes our effort to thrive—how few of us in the mighty mill of life may get fat sacks of grist from its cruel and ceaseless wheels! Here in the early gloom of night always as now move this forlorn soldiery, with misfortune and endurance for their captains, and with uniforms cut as if by the shears of fate itself into one woful pattern of want. They march with no color and music; we marvel that any laughter should go with them instead, as it does go; but this breaks mostly from the lips of youth, which persist in laughing simply because they are young. As for the sighs that other lips give, we cannot hear those. But both sighs and laughter must serve for the strains of the march, and in the way of light and pomp there is nothing save the grim reverse of either. No windows are opened to see this dull procession file onward; it has become so monotonously commonplace. The masses are seldom picturesque except when they turn bloodthirsty and fling up barricades. They have never flung up barricades in Second Avenue—or in any part of New York, as yet. The politicians and the millionaires cry that such mad anarchy would be impossible in a country where all voters are equal at the polls. Perhaps the real facts of this bruited equality may be questioned. But the politicians and the millionaires say not. And they ought to know; they have studied the entire matter so closely.

But to-night, while the stream of working-folk was in full progress, an occurrence took place which indeed caused a picturesque consternation among its journeying pairs and groups. From the door-way of a small basement-house not hundreds of yards beyond the transverse route of Clinton Place, an old woman, stout and of decent dress like a well-to-do servant's, emerged, uttering plaintive cries. The woman was evidently in a half-hysterical state. She wrung her hands for a second and then for another lifted them quite wildly to that niggard stretch of heaven supplied by all cities. Her plump face shone unduly pale in the faint light. She expressed past doubt the dismay wrought by some abrupt calamity. Words were spoken by her in a pell-mell, distraught style, and those of the homeward crowd who paused in front of her, thus making on the instant a new crowd of much denser sort, heard her repeat several times with comparative clearness a certain chilling dissyllable.

This was "murder." The multitude thickened to a pressing mob in briefer interval than it takes to record that they did so. The woman's audience, thus rapidly summoned by her own mad demeanor, felt swiftly the thrill which made it one incarnate curiosity. Whisper in any frequented street a prophecy of disaster, and that latent relish for the horrible which the best and worst of us might as well own to, since it lies alert in all of us, will leap up avid for facts. Men and women were glued together before that low little stoop, in a trice. If the woman had wanted to leave it she must have used wings, now, and not feet. The narrow-fronted house behind her gleamed ordinarily high, and with no more lurid suggestion in one or two of its lighted windows than that opaque blank which drawn shades give to any gas-lit interior. The awe she had roused vanished for her immediate surroundings after

a very slight lapse of minutes. A number of male figures were soon on the stoop beside her. The desperation of her language and attitude promptly underwent a change. She seemed to realize the publicity for which her cries and gestures had made her responsible. A tumult of questions assailed her, in various tones and accents :

"What's the matter?"

"What's happened?"

"What's up wid yer, annyhow?"

"Vat's de madder?"

"Are ye crazy?"

"Who's been murdered?"

"Is thieves inside there?"

"Say, ole gal, w'at d'yer mean?"

"House on fire?"

"W'at ye howlin' about?"

"Borglairs—zis house—eh?"

"Want us to 'sist yer, ma'am?"

These appeals came in a torrent. The woman had now seen what a riot of excitement her behavior had evoked. Her arms had fallen limply, and she stared about her, with a new sort of fluttered dismay, till her eyes lighted on the face of a man who had pushed himself nearer than any of the others. It may have been that something in this man's gaze and mien struck through her bewilderment with a sense of refuge and aid. She caught his hand and drew him toward the open door-way. He yielded willingly enough to solicitation thus frantically shown. He let himself cross the threshold into the hall beyond. Then the woman dropped his hand, and dashed the heavy front door shut. The two now stood in the hall, facing each other. He who had come there with her was a man of perhaps not more than thirty years. He had a smooth-shorn face, with some strong lines in it; he looked like one who could think with both force and speed in such a crisis as the present. You would have said that he was of the people, or rather that he did not hold himself above them; but his voice and phrasing bespoke education, as he now swiftly said,—

"Tell me at once, in the plainest way you can manage, just what the trouble is."

The woman sank into the one chair which the hall contained. Her observer thought at first that she was about to swoon, for her eyes closed and her head fell slightly backward against the upper carvings of the chair. But she rallied while he drew closer to her, and said in a succession of gasps which her starting tears rendered still more painful,—

"I rushed out there a few minutes ago—I guess I didn't know what I was doing any more than a baby—there's only me and the cook here besides . . . *them*. But I didn't think about her—she's down-stairs, and I'd just come from up-stairs, where *they* are. . ."

"They? who? Tell me who." The young man's voice was tender yet firm; he could hardly have used an inflection at once more diplomatically suave and frankly demanding. He let one hand rest upon the woman's fleshy and trembling shoulder. "Come, now; be a little brave about it," he went on. "There's no hurry—at least, I suppose

not. There, there; you say something's gone wrong up-stairs. Well, that's a beginning. Now for another point or two. Is anybody hurt? Or is it worse? You said——"

"I said it—it was murder," broke in the woman, just here, with a shuddering fall at the end of her exclamatory little sentence. "And—a double murder, too. My employer, Mr. Demotte, has killed his wife, and then killed himself. Or—or it seems to be that. I heard the two pistol-shots. I was in a room on the story above theirs."

"I see. Well? You hurried down, and you entered their room. You found them both dead?"

The tears had begun to stream from the woman's eyes. But perhaps on this account her tremors of agitation were much slighter, and her speech was more controlled. "I think *he* was dead. He's laying stretched right on the floor. His head is all bloody, and his eyes are shut. I guess he must be dead. He's got a pistol gripped in one hand. But *she* . . ." Here the woman gave a great wailful cry and rose from the chair.

"She isn't dead, then?" queried her companion.

"Oh, no. She was breathing when I dashed out of the room. She was on the lounge, all blood-spattered like him, but worse. . . She saw me and knew me. She said 'Lizabeth,' once or twice—that's my name . . . 'Lizabeth. Her eyes were kind of rolling. I ran out of the room to get help. I must have been thinking about Susan, the waitress. I wanted somebody near me that was real alive like I was. . . And then, when I got down here into the hall I—I must have remembered that it was Susan's day out, and I was to set the dinner-table and—and wait on it. Then I s'pose I recollected there was only cook. And cook's an old foolish thing. So there was nobody but me. I—I lost my wits, then, and darted out on the stoop. . ." By this time 'Lizabeth, as she had named herself, was at the first step of the staircase, in act of ascending it. "And she's up there, not dead!" came the poor creature's next dolorous cry. "Oh, may the Lord forgive me that I forgot her as I did! That lovely woman!" She essayed to mount the stairs, but soon paused, as if from severe bodily weakness, clinging heavily to the banister.

"Let *me* go," said the young man, who had sprung nimbly past her, and then had stopped, with his quiet, clean-cut face turned half backward. "I may as well tell you, Elizabeth, that I'm a detective by profession. This sort of horrid thing isn't as new to me as I would like it to be. I'll see to the lady, and if there's any hope of saving her I'll call you. Don't come up yet; wait till I either call *you* or come down."

The woman dropped into a sitting posture on the stairs as he finished this hurried bit of tidings and counsel. But some new access of faintness, caused perhaps by the realization of her mistress's neglected agony, had overwhelmed her already strained nerves; and whether or no he had spoken as he did, she would probably have failed, just the same, to re-seek that lair of horror from which she had but lately fled.

Meanwhile, the young man sped up-stairs. He saw an open door—that of the room which faced on the street—and hurried toward it.



Elizabeth's information now frightfully corroborated itself. The apartment was evidently a kind of sitting-room, prettily and modestly appointed, and lighted by two jets of gas. At the foot of a large arm-chair lay the body of a man, his head bathed in blood, and the pistol of which Elizabeth had already told clutched in one hand. The suicide, as it looked, had sought to reach the arm-chair after dealing himself death, and had fallen too soon, in ghastly failure. There seemed a sort of flutter about his lips; and yet the new-comer was barely certain if any such token of life still remained. Nor could he verify his doubts, just then; for beyond, on the lounge, gleamed another shape, that of a woman; and Elizabeth's remembered words made common compassion seek to aid the living before scrutiny did more than sweep a few glances over him already declared as dead.

The young man now sought the lounge, and bent over a face which even the hideous spots marring it could scarcely rob of its great inherent beauty. She could not have been more than twenty-three years old, at the most. Her hair was a soft dark yellow, and her features were of that fine chiselling which pallor only turns more exquisite. The wound given her was in the right temple, but her head had fallen sideways, concealing all grosser disfigurement. The white lids had dropped mercifully upon her eyes. Her delicate lips met in a line that was not a smile, and yet attested no suffering. It seemed to express a material sigh of regret, though not too deploring a one, at her own miserably violent end. And he who stood beside her soon felt confident that she would never breathe again. He stood there longer than he knew, thrilled by the mystery of a fate so untimely, and fascinated by the tragic presentment of its victim's loveliness.

A hoarse cry suddenly made him start in dismay and wheel eagerly round. And then he perceived something which seemed to stop the beating of his heart. The corpse on the floor had come to life. It had lifted itself on one arm and was staring up at him with a mournful madness in its eyes.

The young man had never been troubled with feeble nerves, and so, in a brief while, his alarm vanished. But the presence of mind he now showed was even better than hardy courage. It flashed through his brain that this murderer and would-be suicide, who had shot himself once without mortal effect, might soon use the pistol near him in a second similar attempt. He therefore hurried toward the pistol, with an instant view of securing it. But in this achievement he did not at first succeed; for the half-prostrate creature on the floor appeared to divine his intent, and caught up the weapon with a hand that shook like a leaf in wind. That he would have sent one more of its bullets at his own skull without further hesitation, was highly probable. But the young man who had watched him and who now sprang upon him, fearless, alert, and sinewy, was quite opposed to any such summary behavior. As a consequence there now ensued the most ghastly contest between these two, one vigorous and whole, the other wounded and wildly desperate. It seemed almost marvellous that the pistol did not go off while they were fighting for its possession. But it did not; and at last the assassin, breathing hard, surrendered. As he sank once



more upon the carpet, his quivering lips just shaped these words, in faint yet audible whisper :

*"My God! To live, after all!"*

Meanwhile, his assailant, having possessed himself of the pistol, had thrust it into one of his pockets. A minute later he gave an exclamation of disgust, for his hands and the linen at his wrists were both dabbled with the red evidence of his recent odious conflict.

The man on the floor soon afterward appeared to have fainted again. Or had death, as we so often find in these hideous episodes, visited with unmerited mercy the most flagrant guilt?

The young man did not pause to inquire. Discovering that the door was provided with a key, it was not long before he had locked the chamber from the outside. As he reached the head of the stairs he found Elizabeth waiting at their foot, in the lower hall.

"You were wrong," he said to her when he had descended to where she was now standing, with her hands knotted tightly together and an appalled, frozen look on her face.

"Wrong?" she faltered.

"Yes. The lady is dead."

"And he?" murmured Elizabeth.

"Well, he may be dead too, by this time. But he gave some sure signs of life when I first went into the room. . . Now tell me, before I begin to act—and I must soon act in good earnest—what do you think was the motive for this crime?"

"There was none—none that anybody could dream of."

"Did those two live happily together?"

"Happily! I never knew a husband to love a wife more—no, nor a wife to love a husband more, either!"

"Had any quarrel ever taken place between them?"

"No; they never quarrelled. But I thought——"

"Well, keep as calm as you can. You thought what?"

"That they were having excited words together as I passed their room when I went up to mine."

"This was how long before you heard the first pistol-shot?"

"Only a few minutes."

"Did you hear any words that you can remember while you were passing that room?"

"Yes; I heard a name. It was spoken by Mr. Demotte himself. It was spoken quite loudly, as—as if in anger and surprise, both. It was the name of his dearest friend—a gentleman who has been away in Washington for a good while—several months, in fact. But lately there came a report that he was missing; no one could make out where he had gone. They wrote to Mr. Demotte about it from Washington, some days ago. He and his wife felt very bad. They talked of going on there together. They thought the world of him, but they hadn't seen him in all that time, and when the bad news came they took it very hard. They were going abroad soon, and they wanted to hear about him, on this account, before they went. I don't see what he could have had to do with this awful thing—a trusted friend like him, that they hadn't even set eyes on for months."

"What was his name?"

"Duane. Douglas Duane."

The young man started. "Douglas Duane," he repeated, as if he spoke to himself rather than to the pale, perturbed woman whom he had been questioning. "I remember. He disappeared mysteriously from his home in Washington not long ago. The papers have been full of it. He was a chemist, a scientist, or something in that line. I recollect the name perfectly. . . Yes, of course. . . Douglas Duane."

## II.

Great crimes rarely affect great cities. Twenty-odd years ago the Burdell murder in Bond Street sent a protracted shiver through New York. Men of commerce, meeting one another, postponed queries about the revival in beef or lamentations concerning the depression in molasses, to discuss the probable guilt of Mrs. Cunningham or the alleged complicity of Snodgrass. An entire number of *Frank Leslie's* was made up of illustrations that depicted every hateful detail of the lurid affair. To have your pet theory regarding this dark deed was expected of you, very much as though it were your preference with relation to the next most satisfactory mayor, or your conviction that the abolition of slavery would or would not be an outrage. The taking off of this ill-fated dentist left a deep damnation behind it that clung to the whole stunned city as if it were some pertinacious malarial vapor. An uncanny dread chilled people for months afterward when they bolted their bedroom doors at night, and it is nearly certain that those nocturnal nomads, the rats and mice, had their midnight caperings very obstinately misunderstood during that special period.

But now a murder in New York hardly will stir more than a ripple or two of public concern. When, on the day that followed Floyd Demotte's totally unexplainable atrocity, its full ghastliness and savagery had transpired, there is no doubt that the multitudinous metropolitan breakfast was consumed without the faintest decrease of appetite. Dollars were deposited in banks or drawn from them, during the next twenty-four hours, with quite the same diligence or reluctance as of old. The immense scheme of life was not interrupted or accelerated by a hair's breadth of inertia or momentum. Sugar did not go down in its market-price, and Wall Street stocks, whose unlimited sensitiveness to the most absurdly foreign incidents no political economist has ever yet satisfactorily explained, continued quite unaffected in their leaps and tumbles by this deplorable event.

Floyd Demotte had not been a man of wide personal acquaintance. His Second Avenue home, in which the crime had occurred, was a part of that large real-estate property bequeathed him a year or two before his majority by his father, Wooster Demotte, an old New York merchant, whom everybody knew. But Floyd, for years previous to his marriage, had never sought social distinction. He had travelled in Europe after quitting Columbia College, and had returned to his native city when about two-and-thirty years old, with the tastes of a book-

collector, a bibliomaniac, a man for whom the last bristlingly elegant ball at Delmonico's or at Mrs. Spuytenduyvil Suydam's Knickerbocker residence offered extremely slight inducement. Like nearly all men who love the outsides of books for their shapes and finish and traditional or historic attributes, he was a poor and spiritless reader. They say of a capable librarian that if he reads he is lost. Floyd Demotte would have made (if fate had not given him through inheritance a clean income of twenty thousand dollars a year) as serviceable a librarian as the resources of our own unscholarly country could well light upon. He came back to America with no intent of marrying. His affection lay all in the rare books which he had gathered together abroad. But he did marry, nevertheless. More might descriptively be written of him in this biographic strain. But our present narrative interest must on the contrary concern itself with two men, one of whom the reader has already seen and known.

In partial way I allude to the observer of Floyd Demotte's calamitous crime after its commission was so horribly apparent. The name of this young man was Ford Fairleigh. He had drifted into his present position as a detective under the best municipal endorsements, for the reason that a near relative of his had been among the influential potentates allegiant to the sway of Inspector X—. Fairleigh had always had his own opinions about Inspector X—'s mode of administration, ever since his bright, exact mind had quitted the excellent discipline of the New York College. His parents had been poor people, and had sent him, after a few years of preparatory training, to that pretty, turreted brick building on the corner of Lexington Avenue and Twenty-Third Street, which is an honor to our hazardous and faulty city government. Fairleigh left the New York College with sense enough to understand just what errors that government tolerates. But he was like a good many more quick-witted young men than our patrician classes take account of. He had abilities, and there seemed no earthly means of his putting them into operation. He did what so many of his contemporaries are doing, in this vast republican city, every new day that shines over it: he took the first chance that offered. He did not like the chance at all, but he saw no other, and by degrees he found himself dropping into methods which had before seemed most stiffly uncongential. Meanwhile, he had made a friend, in the ferreting and spying business to which inexorable environment had so subjected him. This friend was of his own age, or nearly so. He, too, had been graduated at a free college, though one in Boston, not New York. The destinies of the two young men were similar. They were both fitted for better things than the tracking of thieves to lewd dens of refuge, the prowling vigilance needful for discovery of this or that criminal, the face-to-face meetings with grossest blackguards. But here they both were, confronted by the necessity of either thus earning their bread or of not earning it at all. Fairleigh and his friend (whose name was Hiram Payne) had often talked together over the harsh requisites of their own destinies. What they said between themselves (both, be it recalled, were young men of ample mental training) might have roused astonished comment on the part of certain self-satisfied

thinkers with regard to social possibilities of advancement. The common phrase of the prosperous—of the men who have striven and won—was repeatedly discussed between Ford Fairleigh and Hiram Payne. "Oh, if he's got anything in him he'll be sure to come to the front," was this phrase, as these two young detectives (each detesting his compulsory office and each feeling that he was trained for better things) delivered it. But they constantly delivered the phrase in dejected satire to each other. They had tested a truth which even the humanitarians sometimes coldly overlook. They had discovered that thousands of able men like themselves, in the fierce rush of civilization toward success and fortune, are inevitably and frigidly driven to the wall. They had satisfied themselves that there are a great many members of this tossing and turbulent element which we call modern society who are forced to draw blanks in the huge, cold, throng-beset lottery, however richly they may deserve prizes there. This is a truth full of anguish to any keen and true thinker. No man who has fitly used his intelligence and guarded his probity will take on himself to assert that the oak-crown, in our wild, mad modern game, goes usually or even ordinarily to the best athlete. Or, if the umpire be one in the full purple of monopoly, he must grant that the oak-crown, when not meanly bought, is seldom awarded to either the fleetest or the strongest. And even if this be fact, the fleet and strong are legion. There lies the unspeakable pity of our nineteenth-century developments, greatly as they promise, miserably as they fulfil!

Ford Fairleigh and his friend Hiram Payne had talked this and many similar questions over between themselves again and again. They had met in a peculiar and strangely exceptional way. They were both detectives, employed by civic authorities. They were both fitted for higher modes of employment, though neither of them possessed any creative gift suggestive of really lofty end.

But it would have been interesting for some man, their superior both in mental force and worldly position, to have heard a few of their talks together. These talks might have struck for their hearer the true note of so-called modern socialism, and divested from his secure belief in the certain rise of human desert under all circumstances, the fallacious doctrine that there are none meriting ascendancy who do not by right of personal power attain it.

Ford Fairleigh, several days after the Demotte murder (that was what the current newspapers of a better class called it, leaving others of a worse class to call it "Demotte's Desperate Deed," or something equally foolish and alliterative), held a serious talk with his friend Hiram Payne.

Payne was quite the opposite in physical type from Fairleigh. He had stout limbs which a good height redeemed from clumsiness. His frame was large and firm, and the visage that overtopped it was of the wide German look, lit by a pair of blue, amiable eyes. Fairleigh constantly accused him of being a sentimentalist; but he would genially resent this charge, and bring as evidence against it acts of stringent severity toward outlaws whom the hand-cuff could alone potently address.

"I don't know what you would make out of this case I'm working now," said Fairleigh to him, one day, as they sat together. "I am afraid you would be inclined to think that Floyd Demotte's insanity was induced by some hidden infidelity on his wife's part, or a cause just as romantic."

"I've followed the case in the newspapers," replied Hiram Payne, with a touch of belligerent distaste. "And I shouldn't be inclined to do anything of the sort."

"Ah," said Fairleigh, brightening intimately, with a pleased look that his friend met by one of unpropitiated coolness. "So you see, then, what an act of mere empty madness it all was."

"Do you think it that?" returned Payne inscrutably.

"Do *you*?" came Fairleigh's questioning and surprising response.

Payne laughed in his mellow, reserved way. "Oh, that isn't fair," he protested. "As a detective of vast sensibility and—what is your pet word for me? . . . sentimentality?—I consider your appeal a trespass on my own preserves."

Fairleigh smiled and shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, very well," he retorted. "I'm prepared to be matter-of-fact enough, Hiram; I always am. To my thinking, coarse and commonplace as its method may be, Floyd Demotte killed his wife simply because he was riotously and furiously mad."

"You don't believe, then, that Douglas Duane had anything to do with the affair?"

"Douglas Duane! Why, man, he hadn't been in New York for months. He'd been living in Washington."

"From which city," said Payne, ruminatively, "he disappeared in the most unexplained manner."

"Yes. A few weeks before the commission of Demotte's crime."

"And nothing has ever been heard of him since his disappearance?"

"Nothing."

"He is thought to be dead?"

"He is thought to be—missing."

Payne softly laughed once more, and drew out a cigar, which he proceeded serenely to light. The two friends were in a little room at their official Broadway head-quarters. They had lunched together at a German restaurant in William Street, near by, a place where they could get a glass of fairly good Rhine wine and a brace of succulent sausages for a moderate expenditure of dimes. This was a possible hour of leisure with both of them. They were awaiting potential orders from closeted powers beyond. Fairleigh never smoked. He watched the smoke of his friend's cigar curl, however, in misty spirals toward the ceiling, and told himself how much better the man who wrought them would have been fitted for a less practical calling than his present one.

Breaking the silence, which had become a little onerous, Payne now said,—

"Oh, very well. Call it missing or call it dead, as you please. Meanwhile, Floyd Demotte lies in a hospital, shot through the skull, yet in a fair way of recovery."



"If he recovers," said Fairleigh, "he will be a worse madman than he was before."

"Ah," said Payne, shifting in his chair and crossing his substantial legs. "So you persist in saying that he killed his wife from sheer insanity alone?"

Fairleigh made an irritated gesture. "Hiram," he exclaimed, "you're incorrigible. You will cling to fanciful theories. I know so well just what you're trying to suggest."

"What?" inquired Payne, phlegmatically.

"Why, this: that a man neither of them had seen for an age had something to do with the crime. It's true that this servant, Elizabeth, heard the name of Douglas Duane spoken irately by Demotte just before the murder occurred. But that proves nothing. Mrs. Demotte was a saint of virtue. She adored her husband. There isn't the faintest indication that she ever cared for Douglas Duane except as a friend."

"I didn't suggest that there was, Ford."

"Oh, the devil you didn't!" cried Fairleigh. "You never allude to the affair that you don't imply something of that description. You make me feel it, even if you don't say it. You exhale an atmosphere of it, somehow. You ought to have written novels. I suppose you will, some day, old fellow. And then you'll make proper use of the rich imagination that's so mournfully out of place in a pursuit like ours. Come, now, I know what you're secretly brooding over."

"I don't doubt you do," was Payne's placid answer.

Fairleigh gave a kind of sarcastic nod. "Wizard," he broke forth, rising, "you think this missing Washington chemist was the lover of Floyd Demotte's wife. I'll wager you do."

"Of course I do," said Hiram Payne, smoking quietly. "So do you."

"Nonsense!" disclaimed Fairleigh, bristling. "Do you take me for a man steeped in falsehood? I tell you I think nothing of the sort. Please note that. I think nothing of the sort."

"Excuse me," said Payne, with a smile so covert and subtle that it went near exasperating his friend; "I apologize, then, Ford. I own that I was under a different belief."

"Bah!" cried Fairleigh, flinging himself annoyedly into his chair again. "You'll maintain that Douglas Duane held that picturesque position, in spite of every existing disclaimer. You always look at a case, my dear fellow, as if you expected to find a new plot in it for Gaboriau or Wilkie Collins."

"Well, you know how I look at this one, and I suspect that you would have a rather hard time of it if you tried to prove me wrong."

"I couldn't prove that the side of the moon we don't see is not composed of plum-tart; but I have, nevertheless, a firm conviction to the contrary."

"What about the testimony of Demotte's friends?" Payne said, after another little pause.

"He had no friends."

"Really?"

"Oh, there were some people, of course, who went to the house in Second Avenue, but it would be worse than exaggerating to call them friends. The truth is, Floyd Demotte, who was a book-collector, fell into the habit of treating his wife as if she were a very rare edition indeed and by no means designed for promiscuous handing about."

"You mean—he was jealous?"

"Inordinately so."

"My dear fellow!" exclaimed Payne. "And you refuse to regard Douglas Duane as the cause of this murder! Why, you said yourself that he once lived there in Second Avenue under the same roof with Mr. and Mrs. Demotte."

"So I did, Hiram. . . Now, this jealousy of Floyd Demotte's was by no means of the ordinary sort. I have lately fallen in with a man who knew him as well as any man ever did know him, I suppose, except the missing Douglas Duane. And this man assures me that Demotte's conduct was simply of the passionately exacting kind. He could not endure the society of his wife to be shared by others. It did not at all matter who those others were; it did not indeed matter what their sex was. He had no amatory jealousy of his wife—and from every scrap of evidence I can collect, he never had the remotest reason to feel any. But he was stoutly, ludicrously, abnormally jealous of her, for all that. Everybody, in his queer estimate of things, represented an adverse force, at war with his own superabundant uxoriousness. One by one Mrs. Demotte's acquaintances dropped away from her; it was he who compelled her to isolate herself; life would have been burdensome if she had done otherwise; he would never have used with her the least tyranny, but his extraordinary melancholy and his continual implied reproach must have been a still more tedious doom. By degrees the social circle of the Demottes became narrowed to a very few individuals. Mrs. Demotte was the daughter of an old bookworm here in New York, named Adam Hadley. She had lived in peculiar retirement; her days had been passed chiefly in the companionship of her valetudinarian father. So, you see, there were not many people whom Floyd Demotte's funny jealousy could offend."

"And Douglas Duane . . ." here struck in Payne, musingly. "How was it that *he* continued to be tolerated by this nice, genial husband?"

"Ah, there is a most singular feature of the whole singular situation. Douglas Duane appears to have been the sole human being toward whom Demotte behaved in a refreshingly human manner."

"Yes?" said Payne, with a nod that hinted depths of doubt. "He didn't rouse any of the monstrous morbidness that everybody else came in for a taste of? What on earth was the matter with him? Had he a hunch? Or was he afflicted with goitre?"

"Neither," replied Fairleigh, with the curtness we use when distrustful of the proper respect by which our opinions are being privately greeted. "I am led to understand that Douglas Duane was a man of very marked personal attractions. I don't mean beauty—rather, mental gifts."

"I was prepared to hear so," stated Payne, with a tormenting dryness. "And so he was permitted to have an occasional chat with his



friend's wife, and *not* to fear being thrown out of the window as a punishment."

"He was loved and honored by Floyd Demotte, as I have every reason for believing that he deserved to be. That is, to put it bluntly, I am satisfied he never dreamed any more of nourishing a sentiment for Demotte's wife than he dreamed of making gold or diamonds from the chemicals in which he was so fond of dabbling. . ." Here Fairleigh leaned back in his chair and stared ruminatively at the ceiling. "Ah, no, Hiram. . . The whole mystery of that murder and suicide can't be explained in that way. . . If Floyd Demotte ever became sane, and so rendered himself a criminal to be tried by the law, we *might* reach some astounding disclosures. But I don't think we would. The man went mad, and became the prey of hallucination. There it all begins, and there it all ends. He was a most likely and fit subject for lunacy. Such deeds as the one he committed are happening every day. The brain sometimes gives no warning of its sudden collapse. We say of a man for years, 'he is odd,' and some morning we wake up to the fact that he has gone mad. . . Well, as with the brain, so with the body. Sudden seizures kill that in a second. Acute heart-disease or apoplexy is no less common, perhaps, than acute dementia."

"What is Demotte's condition now?" asked Payne.

"Oh, he's in a horrible state. His life hung by a thread for nearly a week. Then he showed signs of recovery. But it must be a recovery that will only doom him to a more lingering death hereafter in a mad-house."

"And they will send him to one as soon as his physical strength permits?"

"Yes."

"Does he talk deliriously at all?"

"Oh, he raved a lot of nonsense at first, I was told. But they could make nothing out of it. He is silent, now, for hours at a time. He had an insane fancy, when first brought to the hospital, that he was——" But here Fairleigh paused with pointed abruptness. "I won't tell you what form the fancy took," he continued, giving Payne a burlesque scowl of hostility. They were the best of friends; they never quarrelled; there was somehow a safeguard against rupture in their incessant mutual dealing of skin-deep wounds.

Payne's eyes began to sparkle. "Come, now, Ford," he said, "let's see if I can't guess what those ravings are about."

"Oh, you'll guess that they're about Douglas Duane," cried Fairleigh challengingly. "You want them to be. I dare say, Hiram, that you've got some pet idea as to the corpse of Douglas Duane being procurable, if a fellow should only search industriously enough for it, in small fragments among the pantries and crannies of that Second Avenue dwelling."

"More amazing things *have* happened," smiled Payne. "But you are wandering from the main question. *Did* Floyd Demotte rave on the subject of Douglas Duane?"

"Well, yes, he did."

"Very empty stuff, no doubt; eh?"

"I should say so," declared Fairleigh, with the air of one who has a bit of refuting intelligence that he now means to pop forth from ambush. "He insisted that he *was* Douglas Duane. He constantly called himself by that name, and seemed quite forgetful of his own personality."

"Ah! . . . that's mere Bedlam business, of course."

"And discouraging for your theory; won't you grant that it is?"

"Not at all," affirmed Payne, with comic stubbornness. "A mad-man will say anything. But why didn't he think himself the President, or the Prince of Wales, or somebody like that? Why should Douglas Duane have entered into his fantastic dreams? Truly, Ford, it seems to me that your magnificent pooh-poohing of Douglas Duane as a personality to be considered in this case is a trifle . . . well, to phrase it mildly, old fellow, a trifle obstinate."

Fairleigh condescended to make no reply for several minutes. Then he said, with an air of gentle interest, as if he were a physician whose profound friendliness quite eclipsed the consideration of any prospective fee,—

"My dear Hiram, has it ever occurred to you that you smoke more than is just good for you? When we drench the brain with nicotine, you know, we must not be surprised by bad results."

"I haven't found any yet," said Payne serenely. "Why don't you smoke, Ford? I think the narcotic effect would round off the sharper points of your mental angles."

"Delightful!" said Fairleigh. "Save that for your forthcoming novel. What are you going to call it, by the way?"

"I don't know," answered Payne, seeming to reflect. "I think 'Douglas Duane' would be a good name for it; don't you?"

"No," said Fairleigh crisply, "unless you're like some of these modern American writers who believe in a story without the ghost of a plot."

The two friends did not discuss Floyd Demotte's crime together for several ensuing weeks. When they next touched upon it, circumstances had wrought radical changes in its perpetrator. He had been pronounced sufficiently well of body to be transferred from hospital to asylum. But his mind was now, in a general sense, the most hopeless wreck. He had terms of utter madness, followed by lucid hours of dull and stolid silence. But during the latter he had indicated his desire to write, and in this humor he had been freely encouraged.

It was supposed, at the outset, that what he wrote would prove the most vacuous kind of absurdity. But this turned out to be very far from the truth. These confessions of Floyd Demotte's amazed everybody who looked at them. The writer was deceived into thinking that they were successfully concealed from all inspection but his own. Otherwise he would probably have destroyed them in annoyance, as he had repeatedly asserted, during his intervals of comparative mental order, that these most remarkable memoirs were destined to confer immense benefit hereafter upon the scientific knowledge of mankind. But not until his meditated work was complete, he furthermore avowed, could its value become splendidly established. When the last page was

finished he designed giving it to the world; but not until then. Rather than do so he would leave all unwritten. The law, with its clutch still upon him, directed his warders to watch eagerly everything he wrote. An exposition might lie in those pages of the motive by which he was swayed when he killed his wife, and thus a deduction might also be reached as to whether he were sane or mad at the time the shooting occurred. He was given every incentive, in the way of comfortable surroundings, to continue his work. Meanwhile, secret copies had been taken of it at different periods. Ford Fairleigh was among the first who saw these copies. Their sheets impressed him greatly, but that was all. For the most part they struck him as insanity made to pose for its opposite. But when he mentioned to Payne the manuscript that was in course of preparation under such weirdly interrupted conditions of composition, his friend expressed the strongest desire to see it.

"And so you shall," answered Fairleigh, "when it is finished. I make you a promise of that, Hiram. There will no doubt be a small edition of it privately printed, and you shall certainly be gratified."

"The writing may take a rather long time, I should say," answered Payne, "if it is true that Demotte is prevented from steadily proceeding with it by recurrent fits of madness."

"It is true," said Fairleigh. "And what seems wholly marvellous about the case is the man's own perfect realization that he is insane. More than once he has risen from his desk, put aside his pen, and quietly declared that he had better stop just there, as he felt one of his bad attacks coming on."

"And yet you say, Ford, that the confessions read as if they were those of a lunatic?"

"As far as I have got in them, they suggest an extremely fine mind," said Fairleigh, "yet one most seriously fevered and clouded." . . . But a few days later he told Payne that he had seen more of them, and that he considered they were growing wildly preposterous. "Not," he added, "that their peculiar fascination abates in the least; on the contrary, it increases; and the narrator's air of firmly believing every syllable of what he writes, lends to his story a new distinction. Already he has shown signs of accounting for the murder of Mrs. Demotte, for his own attempted suicide, and for—don't leap at me in astonishment, Hiram—the disappearance of Douglas Duane from his Washington home."

"Good heavens!" cried Payne, turning rather pale as the words left him. "He has shown signs of *accounting* for these events?"

"Yes. But in such a way! It's very thrilling, very eloquent, my dear boy, but . . ." Fairleigh lifted both arms in the air and then waved his hands over his head extravagantly. "Wonder-land is out of fashion nowadays. I don't think even your imagination will be quite elastic enough to stretch just that far. Still, there's no telling."

"I'd like to have the chance of telling," said Payne, with fervor. "When will you give it to me?"

"When the marvellous document is finished."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Payne. "With an invalid, an epileptic, like that, its end may never be reached."

And Payne's half-prophecy hit the truth. A fortnight later his friend informed him that Floyd Demotte, levelled by a new stroke of worse illness than any from which he had yet suffered, was once more incapable of touching his manuscript.

"Do the doctors fear he will never come to his senses again?" was Payne's quick inquiry.

"They fear he will go out of them permanently," said Fairleigh, in grim undertone, "and by that strait little pathway that we must all take sooner or later."

"Death, eh?"

"Yes—by paralysis of the brain."

"And his papers?"

"They'll be handed down to posterity, in that case, as one of the most extraordinary fragments that the annals of lunacy have yet given literature."

The very next day Floyd Demotte breathed his last at the asylum, painlessly and suddenly.

Fairleigh had considerable trouble about procuring for Payne that incomplete record left by the unfortunate dead. No edition of it was printed, and only a very few written copies were made. The pity which is so sure to follow a death like Demotte's, even when preceded by an action as horrifying as his own, had sprung up quite lively among the medical guardians who surrounded his last hours. He had certain relatives, too, distant and yet bearing his name. These desired the strange tale suppressed, holding that for it publicly to transpire would inflict a needless notoriety upon themselves. But Fairleigh persevered; he had become very well acquainted with one of the physicians at the asylum, and he pressed his suit with not a little tact and diplomacy. One evening he called at Payne's lodgings and handed him a roll of papers.

"There," he said. "I have given Dr. F—— my solemn word of honor that I will return this to him, intact as it is, in twenty-four hours, and that not a single line of it shall be copied."

"Agreed," replied Payne, opening the packet.

"My reputation as an honest man, Hiram, is in your hands. Remember that."

"I do," said Payne. "As for the twenty-four hours, Ford, I probably won't require so long a term of grace. If you've not been deceiving me as to its qualities of entertainment, my friend, I shall perhaps feel inclined to sit up all night over what is inscribed here."

Fairleigh put his head a little on one side and scanned the speaker with eyelids fluttering in an impudently critical way. "Well, all in all, considering that it's *you*, I should be disposed to think you *would* sit up all night."

And Payne did. He read the pages which here follow.

## THE STORY.

## III.

At the very beginning of this autobiographical effort I find myself called upon to make an announcement of so absolutely unprecedented a sort that I shrink alike from the mockery and compassion of those whom it may meet. And when I recall the circumstances under which I have resolutely determined to compose this most astonishing history—the surroundings of mental disease or infirmity which taunts me taking sharper stress of irritation each new day—I recognize how futile must be the hope of my gaining respectful credence. But they who at first deny me such tribute must afterward liberally pay it. That is quite inevitable, provided these words of mine are read to the end. I do not deny that the suicidal wound I gave myself has produced in me grave cerebral results. And yet the lesion has assumed, I am convinced, a morbidly recurrent, epileptic shape, which may subject me to acute attacks of mania, of exhaustion, or even of entire coma, while it leaves me interregnums of the most rational self-command. These fortunate occasions I mean to grasp and use. My motive for so employing them is not one of self-extenuation. I accept the verdict of vicious egotism which will of necessity be rendered against me by those who fully appreciate the magnitude and peculiarity of my unexampled temptation. No, my impulse is selfish, and yet far less selfish than any contained in the wholesale tendency to mitigate due responsibility for a desperate though deliberate crime.

I wish to receive from my kind the full measure of fame for a discovery which, as I am in no manner doubtful, will prove of golden benefit to humanity. It is a dreary commonplace enough to state that science, which groped darkling through many previous centuries, has moved along during this last century with very nimble feet. Sooner or later the great truth which I have been first of all men to tear forth from the obscuring mists of nature's many concealments will shed its helpful dawn upon this planet. Now that all is over for me as a separated and individual being, I desire the rather fanciful glory of a single posthumous boon. I wish that the termination of my singular career shall not be, on the one hand, merged into mere criminal odium and obloquy, or receive, on the other, that somewhat undignified and petty fate which befalls a man who strangely disappears from among his fellows and is never again heard of by succeeding generations.

If the foregoing sentence flings a challenge to sober reason and seems to savor of insanity's most daringly insoluble paradoxes, I shall not be at all surprised. And belief that I am merely dressing up madness till it wears the outward garb of reason will very possibly grow for the sceptic who now condescendingly reads me further. For in writing these confessions I must at once declare that I do not write them at all in the person of Floyd Demotte, but in that of Douglas Duane, his former intimate friend, the man who has through weeks past been missing from his Washington home—the scientist whose problematical



spiriting away has caused so many columns of newspaper wonderment, gossip and speculation.

Let me begin, then, from my own presumptuous and seemingly fantastic stand-point. I, Douglas Duane, address the world merely in the body of Floyd Demotte, husband of the woman, Millicent Hadley Demotte, who was so cruelly murdered in Second Avenue on the evening of December 8th, 188—.

My family, the Duanes, have for seventy years and longer been people of note and repute in this country; and so, when I mention the fact of my father, Archibald Duane, having moved from Boston to New York when I was a boy and having taken a handsome residence in the then fashionable quarter of Bleeker Street, where I, his only child, was reared, this allusion wears but the hues of ordinary reminder and not by any means those of novel information. My father's fine and upright life as a member of the legal profession, when to shine at all in that profession was to rank as a leading and honored citizen of New York, requires from myself neither comment nor commemoration. He was the most loving and indulgent of fathers. He never crossed me in any but a single wish, and for doing that with firmness I often afterward felt deeply disposed to thank him. At the age of eighteen I had already made two trips abroad with him—one while my dear mother was still alive, and one when later boyhood was just verging upon adolescence. Our sojourns in Europe had been brief; I preferred my own country, and greatly relished the idea of entering Harvard rather than a German university. But my father, always so gently and fondly yielding in other matters, was obdurate here. To Heidelberg I must go, and to Heidelberg I finally went. My father, like few Americans of even his so-called patrician class, distrusted and was held to undervalue the best educational resources of his own country. He was a man whose judgments on many subjects were regretted and denounced by his warmest friends; but it delights me now to feel that I can safely rank him with the very few unprejudiced and wholly dispassionate thinkers whom I have ever known. He drew a sharp line between patriotism and that reckless glorification of everything American which has won the merited censure and ridicule of contemporaneous foreign critics. He had a big heart and a keen brain. He loved to strip the husk of sophistry from disguised truths. His tenets were always as bold as they were sincere, and he possessed the courage of them to a degree which won him easy foes while it made him a few fast friends. In religion his liberality and tolerance were held as execrable by hordes of pietists for whom his white life might well have been a secure exemplar. Had he lived a few decades later, he would have been far more outspoken and rationalistic. As it was, he waged a stout enough fight with orthodoxy to stifle indignantly the sluggish blood of many bigots. My own more pronounced but equally unconventional attitude in early life was a direct result of the model which he set me. Thanks to his influence, I faced the dogmas and platitudes of daily existence with a prepared antagonism. My natural faculties were good, but I detested the complexities of linguistic study, and could never master them. Latin and Greek were odious to me, and

all my efforts to gain the slightest literary solace from such writers as Horace or Sallust, Homer or Thucydides, were pitifully barren. At the same time I felt an alert disposition to declare classical systems of education a foolish traditional vagary. I have never had occasion to alter this estimate. The more I have contemplated what huge ignorance our world contains, the more I am led to deplore time wasted in any sort of culture not purely practical; and poems, histories, essays written many centuries ago in languages now forever dead, are past doubt the reverse of practical. All thoughts which these enshrine, however noble and precious, may be made clear to us through translation, and indeed have been so made clear; it is therefore idle to set out by a long and circuitous road for the arrival at ideas which a much shorter one may reach. The passionate defence of the classical system undertaken by certain zealots in this and other countries cannot but make the truly impartial observer realize with what hard struggles old useless faiths die. The antagonism which I now began with so much ardor to manifest in this one direction was but a single evidence of my multiform desire to slay prejudice by reason and dissipate superstition in proof. Such eagerness of longing after the actual and demonstrable in all natural, social, or ethical problems at length gave me a certain celebrity among my associates at Heidelberg. But though, like all enthusiasts in thought of whatever quality, I soon gathered about me a certain rather fervent *clientèle*, it was not long before the surroundings of a German university began to fret and depress me. I remember writing home several letters to my father in which I unmercifully lashed with sarcasm the principles of tuition that confronted me and the dreamy character of the philosophy that we students were called upon to investigate and endorse. My wails gradually ceased, however, as the tone of my father's responses indicated how slight a sympathy they woke in him. And then, by degrees, a cynical but very noteworthy and significant change took place in me. I determined to probe the philosophies of Kant, Hegel, Fichte, and other less noted German thinkers to their remotest roots. A kind of scornful impetuosity went with this task as I now attempted it. I had already read the great Schopenhauer with reverence and delight, though his genius both for the analytic and the synthetic had irritated me, not seldom, by its *a priori* postures. But his hatred of nearly all the philosophy which his own land has produced, and his cordial *rapprochement* with the open-air vigor of the best English thinkers, gleamed forth refreshing in my recent experiences. And yet Schopenhauer did not by any means wholly please me. I longed for purer reason still—that which Bacon so finely began, and Herbert Spencer so capably continued.

My career at the University may be described as a laugh of irony lasting four years. At the end of this time I had made myself detested by a number of my co-disciples and sincerely liked by a special rather loyal minority of them. My professors abominated me for my hostile disdain of what I frankly denounced as foggy idealism. I yearned for freedom to pursue the mathematical and scientific studies which now seemed preferable among all human cults. Occasional trips to England during terms of vacation had brought me into contact with minds pat-



terned most congenially after my own. Demonstration, exact thinking, the placid and patient search after physical law, the agnostic if not the atheistic way of regarding all final causes, and the fixed creed that mortal intelligence could never pierce beyond defiant boundaries of matter itself while very plausibly and sensibly hoping for large realms of material enlightenment in the future—these considerations and assurances held a prodigious rule and influence over my daily life. I drew a deep breath of relief when the University at length delivered me (and with no mean honors of graduation, reluctantly as these were bestowed) from its resented tediums. On the eve of my escape, as it were, I sent my father an almost rhapsodical letter of self-gratulation. "I quit these bourns of insufferable German mysticism," I wrote him, "for evermore. With your permission, I shall spend six months in England before re-seeking you in New York. There are certain clinging vapors yet in my lungs, and even in my very garments as well, which the healthful breezes of Britain are needed to medicinally exorcise. Next to the happiness of seeing you again will be that of abandoning this priggish community in which I have so long dwelt—a spot of residence where one breakfasts on dogmas and dines on provincialisms." . . . My letter continued for many paragraphs in just this vein of hyperbolical invective, broken here and there with fond allusions to the happy anticipated meeting between my father and myself.

But, as fate bitterly ordained, he never received the lines. An apoplexy of fearful suddenness assailed him shortly after I had written them, and the cablegram which told me of his death reached me while I was actually bidding farewell to my little *coterie* of adherents at the University.

A dreary voyage across the Atlantic brought me to New York with sensations of desolate bereavement. I was now in the full flush of youthful manhood. The fortune left me by my dead father was an exceedingly ample one. But I had no near relations, no one with whom I could hold pleasant friendly converse regarding the dead, whose dumb grave, in a suburban cemetery not far away, stared at me its pitiless apology for consolation. And yet my reception back into the city of my birth was by no means an uncheering one. I was Douglas Duane, a young gentleman of large income and unimpeachable position. There is no people so anxious to recognize its own arbitrary distinctions of caste as the Americans are, in any one who strikingly represents these equipments. When monetary points of attraction also become apparent, the social opportunity, so to speak, is an unlimited one. In my deep mourning I soon found that what are called "our first families" proffered me numberless chances of special and flattering diversion. But I must state abruptly and plainly that I soon perceived just what lay behind the whole hospitable movement, and without hesitation condemned it. I rapidly made up my mind that I did not by any means desire a welcome into New York society. Perhaps a fair majority of my hosts and hostesses concluded simultaneously with myself that I would not at all do for their *salons* and dining-rooms.

I was certainly not by any means a conventional figure. I did not wear my hair long, and there was no startling eccentricity about my

collars; but, for all that, I chose to walk in no beaten track of fashion. As long as I kept well within the bounds of cleanliness and good taste, it mattered very little to me what sort of an appearance I made. Symmetries and graces in inanimate or impassive things never greatly appealed to me. The beauty of women rarely woke in me more than a transient admiration. Color gave me only a neutral satisfaction, not very far from positive indifference, and when I saw it most brilliantly treated by Art I was fondest of those pictures in which it accompanied the literary or "story-telling" element. Music I passionately loved, but this means music of the modern, elaborated, intricately melodious sort, and not the facile jingling tricks of earlier Italian composers. I played fairly well myself, never having the slightest inclination to become a "performer," and indeed disliking persons who had gained such goal of accomplishment, unless they held at their finger-ends that marvellous system of telegraphy between these and the heart-strings which we agree to call genius.

But I possessed none of the little airy, factitious, insincere courtesies which society finds so agreeable because they ring as falsely as itself. When people bored me by their vanity or irritated me by their shallowness, I kept silent. No earthly force of suasion could have made me speak in a dialect that was detestable to my sense of manhood. I was often held to be boorish and insolent when I really felt shocked alone. And yet my reserve, my reticence, was by no means always unintentional. The women who now showered bland civilities upon me, with their rustling silks, their floating perfumes, their decorous and yet often audacious nudities, their hollow phraseology of idle compliment, their suggestions of fatigue ill hid beneath a self-imposed veneer of the *mondaine* and the *femme légère*, wearied and depressed me unspeakably. I could not be of them and with them. I was man of the world enough to see that they would never have noticed me at all were it not for my name and fortune. While I secretly deplored their artificialities, I had a very clear conception of how they were probably yawning at my stupidity behind my back. And all the while I was sensible of a capacity for accepting with the gladdest welcome what was simply and unaffectedly feminine in their sex. I was already a mathematician, and it has been said of mathematicians that they have no positive sentiment for women. But of myself this was not true. I may have been cold, ratiocinative, an idolater of fact, a hater of reveries, but at the same time, during this dubious and unsettled term of my life, I covertly acknowledged a wish for worthy womanly companionship.

Perhaps I should not chronicle a certain incident which befell me one evening after dining at the house of a lady high in worldly prominence. And yet to narrate it will be to explain the precise need which haunted me, and my profound abhorrence for any mere sensual agency which might present itself for the gratification of that need.

The hour was about ten o'clock. I had left Mrs. Van Peekskill's lofty Fifth Avenue stoop, thankful that I had been able to tear myself away so uncompromisingly from the bevy of diners amid whose befurbelowed and white-necktied company I had been thrown unawares. Mrs. Van Peekskill, who was a distant relative of mine through my

mother's family, had sent me a dinner-invitation imploring that I would meet a few friends at her house very informally. The little scented note bore an allusion to our kinship, and a tender touch of recognition, also, that I was in mourning for my father. "But it will be such a small, inoffensive assemblage," ran my third-cousin's delicate handwriting; "you will feel almost as if you were dining with me *en famille*, and that, you know, you will have a perfect right to do, as we are so nearly united by blood." We were not in any way nearly united by blood, but as Mrs. Van Peekskill, a New York grandee, had chosen to think so, my acquiescence in the polite fallacy was thus rendered daintily imperative. I went to her dinner, and found that a kind of gaudy trap had been sprung upon me. It was a gathering of modishly-attired merry-makers who soon seated themselves at a board loaded with flowers and silver and crystal glasses. The wine (and of wine I have never partaken throughout my whole life except in the most sparing way) sparkled from a little group of glasses set at each plate. The air of the room in which we sat was heavy with roses. Viand succeeded viand, served on plates of costly porcelain. The guests were nearly a score, and their chattered merriments fell on my ears with an irksome monotony. I silently execrated the whole entertainment. The lady whom I had taken in to dinner was young and of blooming visage. But as I looked into her conscious eyes, as I scanned the deliberated abandonments of her glowing and artistic costume, as I heard fall from her lips their neat yet empty commonplaces blent with a coquettish challenge that seemed almost mechanical in its well-ordered adroitness, I silently began to regret that Mrs. Van Peekskill had ever plotted to bring us together. When the long dinner was ended, I asked myself whether or no the lady had by this time made up her feeble little mundane mind that I was a sort of semi-civilized ruffian. Afterward came the cigars with the men, none of whom, in their stiff uniformity of formal shirt-bosoms, interested me beyond a concealed inclination to cover them with ridicule. And then, a little later, came what I could not but regard as my most blessed escape. I was certain that while I shook hands at parting with Mrs. Van Peekskill there lay the glitter of ice itself in her would-be winsome smile. I was personally unprepossessing. My countenance had a rough-hewn and sombre look, and not a single point in my general appearance was of the kind by which women are won at first sight. Since my entrance into these drawing-rooms I had done and said nothing suave or graceful enough to dispel the impression wrought by my plain and rather melancholy exterior. But I cared nothing for any such impression, favorable or the opposite. I was only too thankful to rid myself of a most uncongenial atmosphere.

Fifth Avenue gleamed quiet and stately as I struck downward through its narrow and yet imposing domain, not far above Thirty-Fourth Street, where the majestic marble mansion of the dead dry-goods king, Stewart, loomed pale against a keen-starred sky. The weather was almost perfect in its breezeless but stimulating calm. November was dying, and yet no fierce news of winter had given even a single chill premonition. The extraordinary, lingering, unparalleled autumn of America was regnant on this especial evening, and with a

cool, rich charm that no one can fitly value till he has seen and disliked the vapory, chilling autumns of most European lands. I no longer dwelt in the family home in Bleeker Street; it still remained my property, but it had been rented to a German Jewess, who kept there a theatrical boarding-house for transitory and perhaps effete members of the dramatic profession. My present apartments were at the Albemarle Hotel, that most dignified of New York inns, which has preserved through many years a prosperous gravity unharmed by the palatial smartness of the Fifth Avenue Hotel on the one hand and of the flaring and flamboyant Hoffman House on the other. I had possibly reached Twenty-Eighth Street, in my downward walk, when I suddenly saw the form of a solitary woman emerge from the heavy encompassing shadow of the corner I was about to pass. In another instant the light of a near lamp struck upon her face. I paused involuntarily as I saw it. Something made my heart beat quicker. I discerned the face perfectly, and it seemed to me full of the most exquisite girlish loveliness. In London, whose horrors of street-harlotry I well knew, I would not have thought of pausing. But here in New York, where vice is kept so much more decently within-doors, I at once obeyed such a desire. The girl showed not the least aversion to pausing also. And yet I thought she looked the very incarnation of innocence, with her luminous dark eyes beaming from a face of virginal fragility and sweetness. Her attire was so mean and shabby that it did not surprise me when she asked for help. I stood before her simple, lily-like face and ill-clad figure with a glow at my heart which all the grandeurs and braveries of Mrs. Van Peekskill's *dames d'honneur* could not have created there. I presently questioned her of her family, and received such hesitating and stammered answers that for the first time I began to suspect she was not telling me the truth. And then, in the twinkling of an eye, she dropped her mask. Letting her head fall backward a little, she looked at me with the look no woman's face has to my thinking ever worn and yet preserved its beauty. . . I scarcely needed to hear the reckless words and the little wanton ripple of laughter which now left her lips; I already knew the dispiriting truth as clearly as when these had told it me! . . . Putting a few coins into the girl's hand, I hurried away from her. In an instant her believed purity had become for me the most repulsive shame. But her poetic face, with its eloquent eyes, in which the chastity of a young soul seemed sleeping, haunted me afterward amid more than a single dream. At the same time, this brief yet pregnant episode revealed to me my own changed nature. I had passed through a few wild follies, first at the University, and again in Paris. These had been somewhat savage mutinies, too, of my baser against my better parts. But now the last had brought their foes under inflexible discipline. I comprehended that hereafter all my mental lights were dimmed, so to speak, except the cold and bright one of reason. Human sin, the degradation either of man or of woman, was loathsome to me for causes which concerned a severe moral code of utilitarianism rather than through what we term instinctive or intuitive repugnance. I loved the good of life and shrank from its evil exactly as I would have chosen to walk through a daisied field rather than a snake-haunted

marsh. I had become a philosopher who saw in all self-soilure what he believed the worst conceivable folly,—disdain of those marvellous reasoning-faculties which mark so broad a line between men and brutes.

In the company of my own sex I was far more contented than at such entertainments as those of Mrs. Van Peekskill. Here immediate flight from distasteful associates in every way was easier, and the intensely practical character which my own mind was now each year assuming with sharper definiteness made me find something of interest in observing or questioning almost every male mind I encountered. Sometimes—as, for example, in the fashionable Metropolitan Club of which I had been promptly made a member—I would meet a type of manhood that taxed endurance and tried respect. I mean the perfectly idle “swell,” who tranquilly exulted in having both his capacities and his energies represented by the roundest of zeros, and who took for granted that I, on account of my known wealth and some absurd claim which he insisted on connecting with me and which he chose to call my “position,” was of just his own lazy and effortless turn. This sort of drone in the huge hive woke my spleen and vexation. When he talked to me of his four-in-hand and his betting-book, his polo-playing and his yacht-races, his coarse gallantries and his equally coarse condescensions as a person of matrimonial market-value, I am afraid that he more than once noticed with surprise my discouraging apathy. But, after all, such occasions were infrequent. Still, the club soon wearied me as a place of habitual resort, and besides I had set myself a course of decidedly hard reading, varied with many experiments which involved the strictest care and the most rigorous mathematical calculations. One day, while searching among some old scientific volumes at a second-hand book-shop in University Place, near Washington Square, anxious to discover here a certain treatise, long out of print, but which I had been told there was a chance of my thus lighting upon, I made, or rather re-made, the acquaintance of Floyd Demotte. How woful is the commonplace of reflecting from what trifles of incident our most vital future misfortunes may be born! And yet the pertinence of such a meditation pierces me just now. Had I never known Floyd Demotte, the horror, the strangeness and the agony of this little history might never have been written. And I was so completely without the least presage of what lay stored black and threatening for me in the future, when a tall, pale gentleman, of apparently about my own age, came up to me in the dim, dingy, book-lined place where I stood, and said, putting out his hand,—

“I am sure that I am right. You are Douglas Duane. It is a good while since you and I met, and we have both changed a great deal, of course. I hope, however, you remember me. I am Floyd Demotte.”

“Ah, yes; true enough,” I answered, taking his hand. “Floyd Demotte, I am very glad to see you again.”

#### IV.

My words were hardly true. I was not in any real sense glad to see Floyd Demotte again. Still, I was by no means sorry. We had



been school-mates from the age of about eleven to fourteen years, respectively. Afterward our parents had separated us by sending us each to a different institution of learning, preparatory to our making the collegiate plunge. It was a queer school, that one of Mr. Gillespie Gordon's, and the intimacy which soon followed upon Demotte's re-introduction of himself in the dusty twilight of the book-shop was perhaps first stimulated by the reminiscences which we could now mutually laugh over.

"No wonder our fathers took us away from it," I presently found myself saying to Floyd Demotte; "we ought to be thankful that they got us away before all studious habits were completely killed in us."

Mr. Gillespie Gordon was a New York dandy with a repute for scholarship among certain pleasure-loving people who could not have told you whether Hector was a Greek or a Trojan: perhaps a few of them might have agreed with you if you had called him an American. Mr. Gordon Gillespie, finding himself with a depleted bank-account, caressed the chronic rose in his button-hole and mused as to the propriety of setting up a school. He had so many dear friends; they would be sure to give him a helping hand. And they did; but this is considerably more than Mr. Gillespie Gordon may be said to have done to their numerous boys. Our taste of discipline was about as bitter as the perpetual nibbling of a sugar-plum. Mr. Gordon pointed to us with pride as the delightful testimony of his friends' tender devotion, and whenever he most keenly realized how valuable a tribute we brought him from patrician circles he would decree the entire school a half-holiday. With all his amiability and benignity (and I once thought him a seraph for both), he now appears to me, this highly aristocratic school-master, very much more astute and self-centred than I could then have dreamed of supposing him. His indulgences to his pupils were the despair of every teacher he employed, and his whole system of educational superintendence was *pour rire* in the polite bad faith of its laxity; and yet he thus managed to have all the boys on his side, and they were wonderful preventives against his being ignominiously found out. It was always so pleasant for them to go on nibbling at the sugar-plum.

"That is why we all stayed on at Gordon's as long as we did," I now said, laughing, to Floyd Demotte. "We each of us constituted such a loving, selfish and zealous little advertisement for the school. I remember I didn't dare tell my father how every boy one day received an orange, a banana and an excuse from studying any lessons for the morrow, because a certain ocean-steamer which had been overdue about a week, and which carried some relatives of our dear *magister*, had at last come safely into port. I was afraid my father *might* object to such an extension of clemency on the ground of rank imposition."

"Which it certainly was," affirmed Demotte, with the same pleasant ring in his voice that I had liked years ago.

Time had changed him for the better. He had been a rather lank and awkward boy, with hardly a facial line that did not err against beauty. But now he had acquired a really classic charm of expression that suited his almost commanding height. His pallor had lost the least unhealthy tint, and his eyes, always notable for their depth and

their sea-blue sparkle, had become infused with a gently meditative light. His figure, growing taller, had smoothed away all its old angles into a blending of vigor and elegance. He was clad with a quiet art that made him look the gentleman as I could not have done if my life had been the forfeit of such failure. I am compelled, just here, to obtrude upon the reader this physical contrast between us, for reasons which will later be fully understood. My visage was at all times a sombre, homely and unprepossessing one. No garment, however dexterously cut, could charitably disguise the stoop in my shoulders or the infelicitous modelling of my frame. But Floyd Demotte had the real *bel air*, though he was so far from resembling anything foppish that you seemed to discern in him the scholar as quickly as you discerned the easy-going worldly saunterer.

And that is assuredly no unfair way of describing his personality. But scholar, as I soon afterward learned, he was none. His craze for rare editions of books meant simply the dilettante and cultivated "fad" of a man who was refined enough by temperament to avoid those more frivolous diversions which are apt to accompany a copious income. What won me about him, now that we had met after the old boyish good-fellowship had clothed itself in a memorial haze, was his perfect suavity of disposition wed with a natural modesty and retirement. He was the son of a dead New York merchant who had left him conspicuously rich. Like myself, he avoided the aimless unrest of the pleasure-lovers. Like myself, he was exempt from stupid vices. Like myself, he chose the silences of life's lanes and meadows rather than the turmoil of its thoroughfares. The rosy frenzies and intoxications had no lure for him; he was the most domestic and shade-seeking of spirits. But, wholly unlike myself, he was without the slightest dominating purpose. All that he appeared to ask of destiny was a comfortable and unharassed lease of existence. It struck me, at first, that he was almost wholly passionless—that so long as he could go on collecting his library and passing his days with a good digestion, a cheerful hearth-stone, a commodious arm-chair and a mellow-flavored cigar, he would remain an individual of unrivalled contentment. But while we slowly yet surely resumed the intimacy as men which as boys we had once sought and enjoyed with so different a zest, I began to note traits in Demotte till now unsuspected. It had already occurred to me that he was more than pleased whenever I dropped in upon him of an evening at the cosey little basement-house in Second Avenue which had been one of his manifold real-estate bequests from his father, and which he had chosen as a residence because of the reposeful, old-time quarter in which it stood. He always welcomed me with a brightening of demeanor and a warm pressure of the hand which I could not mistake. He would conduct me up to his beautiful library on the second floor of the house, above the dining-room, and would wheel forward a cushioned easy-chair for my convenience, revealing in every gesture his unmistakable gladness at my coming. The visits were not all on my side, however. I had left my apartments at the Albemarle several weeks ago, and had taken a furnished house in one of the side-streets not far from Madison Square, turning its entire upper story (which in no way resembled the



traditional rude attic) into a laboratory supplied with many costly instruments of science. Here Demotte would in turn spend an hour or two with me, apparently attracted beyond expression by my discourses on chemistry, optics, the marvels of embryology, of heat, or perhaps of electricity—a study, this last, in which I had of late most appreciably advanced. But I at length began to notice that each of his visits always was paid only after one of my own upon himself, and that if I let too long a time elapse without seeking to see him he would subsequently betray toward me that hurt sensitiveness which we are apt very unjustly to call feminine. Finally the truth became quite clear to me. Demotte's was the jealous temperament in almost painful excess. Most extremely jealous people are essentially selfish, for this fault is one purely of egotism; but Demotte was far from selfish in his daily doings, and, while not in any sense a religious man, gave away annual sums to the poor which many a millionaire of thrice his wealth would shrink from thus employing. This one regrettable failing seemed to exist isolated in a nature of much intrinsic sweetness and honesty. For him to love a fellow-creature was for him to demand, exact, and even self-tormentingly to watch the object of such affection. 'Good heavens!' I remember thinking, 'what will become of this man if he ever falls in love? And what sort of an existence will the woman's be, should she marry him without previously having found him out *au juste*?'

As it was, I humored him in his failing, and hardly liked him any the less for it. I had hitherto been capable of winning a certain amount of personal adherence and even of allegiance, but to win a friendship based purely on sentiment rather than admiration,—there seemed to me a truly golden achievement, and one fraught with its own reward. I had grown to regard everything with the eyes of science alone, and I could not help thinking of this flaw in Floyd Demotte's character as of a distinct flaw in the structure of his brain. How deplorable it was, I told myself, that with all my amassed scientific erudition I had no possible power of looking upon his *optic thalamus* or searching his *corpus striatum* while both were still informed with life! What splendid results of remedy might spring from investigation like that! Perhaps something resembling it will one day replace the mere empirics of our present medical men. It seems odd enough to talk of curing a man of jealousy as you would cure him of a bilious attack; of eradicating avarice from his mind as if it were a tooth taken from his jaw; of lopping away from his brain a depraved impulse as if it were a shattered limb from his body. And yet this was my point of survey for looking upon all moral questions. Evil was to me disease, good was health.

I found in Demotte a tireless listener. "You are teaching me to think," he said, one evening, in my attic.

"That is pleasant to hear," I answered, laughing. "But please don't imagine that I rank my instructive powers in such direction as anything but excessively meagre."

"Come, now, Douglas," said my companion, in his smoothly genial way, "you know that you've gone into the roots of things with an astonishing amount of penetration."

I smiled. "You mean that I love science, Floyd?"

"I mean a great deal more than that. You're positively fierce in your radicalisms."

"Only comparatively so," I responded. "It's a curious age, this nineteenth century of ours—which we call, by the bye, the nineteenth, when it's more probably the fifty-millionth."

"How, curious?"

"It is so abysmally divided. There's such a gulf between the idealists and the realists—between the old men and the new men—between those who believe themselves endowed with an intuition that transcends matter, and those who face matter in the reverential spirit of searchers after a clue amid its monstrous labyrinth of facts."

"You sometimes give a strikingly poetic turn to your phrases," Demotte said, watching me for a moment with a look where fondness and a certain sadness appeared to blend. "And yet the position you have taken is one so antagonistic to all that is spiritual—all that is imaginative—I was on the verge of adding, my friend, all that is higher and finer in either philosophy or metaphysics, as to—"

"I deny it," came my interruption, delivered with not a little heat, though without a shade of annoyance. "There was never a more silly fallacy than that which rests in the charges urged by orthodoxy against science. It is perpetually crying out that we, the friends and devotees of pure knowledge, vivisection the nightingale and anatomize the rosebud. And suppose we do! Which is a more impious act toward that unknowable agency these pietists name God and we name unsolved mystery?—to assert the nightingale and the rose a divine offspring of some celestial beauty, or to use upon the developments of natural law which we see in either, such forces of intelligence as nearly all mankind commonly possess? For my part, I am convinced that civilization is merely the destruction of ignorance."

"But ignorance forever remains."

"It may not forever remain."

My friend started. "You can't intend to even suggest, Douglas, that science, after shattering countless ideals (or superstitions, if you prefer terming them so) will ever pass beyond the limit of final causes?"

"It may pass beyond the limit of what *we* term such. Who shall dare affirm to the contrary? The telegraph, the railway, the steamship, would have seemed like realized miracles a century ago."

"But these discoveries, great as they are, deal only in matter."

My slight laugh, just then, must have had a very ironical ring. "Has it ever occurred to you," I said, "that matter is the be-all and end-all of the whole immense, perplexing scheme?"

Demotte shuddered. "Carlyle's words come into my memory," he murmured. . .

"I know what you are going to quote," I hurriedly broke in. "That flimsy little epigram of his about Darwinism being the gospel of dirt. Now, to my mind, Carlyle was a shallow shrieker, and, as all such men are, a sworn foe against the very progress and advancement of which he made so bombastic an apostle. Whenever a great truth is laboring for birth, some hostile conservative tries to invent a chilling and contemptuous *mot* about it. Oh, that 'gospel of dirt'! How it

has been echoed from one pulpit to another throughout all Christendom! It saved such an extraordinary amount of honest thinking! It had so protective and preservative a sound for those who still put faith in the legendary melodrama of Adam and Eve and the garrulous, bugaboo serpent! No wonder it was popular. But in reality, if taken with a serious and not a flippantly jocose meaning, it condensed a greater truth than Carlyle's turbid and irascible intellect could ever have lighted on. Modern science, if you please, *is* the gospel of dirt. It isn't ashamed to be, either. Dirt really means the planet, the *telus* itself, the habitable globe. And I have never yet been able to learn that the rhapsodists about a less prosaic biding-place were successful, after all, in securing a more trustworthy one than this."

"These conversations of ours," said Demotte, musingly and after a little pause, "all lead me into one belief. I have never put the direct question to you before, but I put it now. Do you, Douglas Duane, place the least faith in the doctrine of immortality?"

"None," I answered.

"I was sure of what I should hear you say," Demotte murmured. "But do you deny immortality, then?"

"Science never asserts nor denies without proof. The moment she does either she ceases to be science and becomes something very much more intelligible and valuable, no doubt, but still not herself. I mean . . . sentimentality."

"How those arrows of your sarcasm sing whenever you make the immaterial their target! . . . Well, then, granting that as a reasoner you neither deny nor assert a future life, had you not just confessed something quite too arbitrary a moment before?"

"And this was . . .?"

"That you failed to place the least faith in immortality."

"Personally I do," came my swift words, for here was the sort of discussion in which at nearly all times I took the keenest pleasure. "A lawyer might glance over the plaintiff's evidence in a certain difficult case, without attempting to study it. He might say, therewith, that on general principles he thought the case likely to be won by the defendant. Such a cursory and superficial scrutiny would scarcely produce anything like an important decision."

"But if the lawyer *had* studied the case!" insisted Demotte. "Why not put it in that way?"

"No lawyer has," I said, smiling; "at least not to the slightest purpose."

"A great many think they have."

"And worse still, a great many know they have not, and yet for the ecclesiastical salaries they draw preach Sunday after Sunday what they themselves secretly discredit. And I'm sorry to say that this monstrous hypocrisy increases, in our era of sceptical inquiry, at a fearful rate. . . . But good heavens!" I broke off, "what are we doing? We have mixed our simile in a sad way; we have confused lawyers with clergymen. That will never do, will it? And yet I have met more than one clergyman who seemed to me like the wreck of a good lawyer."

"You wander from our subject," said Demotte, eying me now as

if he would read in my face more than I was choosing to let it convey.

"Perhaps you have done so intentionally, however," he went on.

"You mean that I wanted to evade your cross-examination?"

"Yes; I fancied you did."

"Then you were not altogether wrong. I dislike to shock others needlessly. Still, in this instance, you would, as it were, have exploded the bomb-shell yourself."

"Then you have another announcement in reserve?"

"If you choose to hear it, yes."

"I do. Does it concern the mortality of what we call the soul?"

"Yes." I rose and drew near a magnificent new electrical apparatus which I had just ordered home to my laboratory. I laid one hand caressingly upon the instrument. "It concerns the discovery of a proof—a law—relating to such mortality."

Demotte started to his feet. "Good God, Douglas!" he exclaimed, "you can't mean that you hope ever to go as far as that?"

"As far as that?" I repeated, looking steadily into his agitated face. "My dear Floyd, I have not yet told you how far I hope to go."

Demotte answered my look in a fascinated way. Suddenly an expression of mixed alarm and pain swept over his face. "Oh, Douglas!" he cried; "beware! be careful!"

"Of what?" I asked calmly.

"Of too great, too insolent a daring," he asseverated, with an excitement and a speed of utterance for which I was unprepared to see so abrupt and yet vivid a betrayal. "God will punish one who—But ah, you don't believe in a God: . . . how can you, when you don't believe in the everlasting life of the soul? Only, Douglas, I—I would say this: Don't let too strong a pride in your own great intellect master you with too absolute a sway! Pardon me, but I can't help recalling to you something which you of course have read. . . ." By this time Demotte, tremulous and eager, had drawn close to my side and had laid one hand on my shoulder. "It is that most magnificent part of all Milton's poem—that which deals, I mean, with the ambition, the ruin and the overthrow of Satan."

"Satan!" I echoed, with a contemptuous laugh. "Oh, he's a theatrical personage enough, and the whole story of 'man's first disobedience' is only saved, to my mind, from being ludicrous, even as Milton tells it, by the rolling and stately blank-verse in which it is enshrined. . . . Still, Floyd, that doesn't prevent your having ranked me with anybody so abominable as this mythical Satan from being highly uncomplimentary."

"I was not thinking of compliments or their reverse," said Demotte, as if he almost resented the levity of my final sentence. "I alluded only to the boldness of revolt which you have just suggested."

"Revolt, my friend. Against what?"

"Against that which must forever lie hidden from man until death brings him a revelation of it."

"Ah, that is the way they talked to Galileo, and yet he insisted on telling us that the earth moved."

Demotte had grown pale. I saw distinctly that I had somehow

impressed him more than I had faintly imagined that I could do by the somewhat random nature of my recent utterances.

"But this discovery?" he queried. "Do you actually aim at anything as—as appalling as you have implied?"

I grasped his hand and shook it warmly. "Upon my word," I said, "you are more than stimulating!"

"I?" he asked, with a little perplexed recoil from me. "How?"

"Oh, you think me capable of doing something brilliant beyond description before you have heard a word of what I meditate performing. There is so much in that!"

"I think you a man of supreme ability," he returned, with a positive accent of awe. "But men of supreme ability, like yourself, are sometimes entrapped and . . . and betrayed by their own powers."

"Entrapped and betrayed?" I repeated, with perhaps a new and rather harsh note in my voice. "Into what, pray?"

"Into . . . punishment for their audacity," Demotte faltered.

I began to see his drift, or to fancy that I did so. I drew backward from him further than he had receded from me.

"What sort of punishment?" I inquired.

"Madness," he said, under his breath. "Oh, Douglas, banish from your mind the least supposition that by any chance you or any man living or to live hereafter can——"

"Madness," I shot in, with as cold a tone as I have possibly ever used. I at once turned my back upon him. For a few seconds I felt myself despising and detesting him. Then I turned again, after I had got my leaping anger under full control, and said with what was doubtless a cutting curtness,—

"A little while ago you accused me of wandering from our subject, and I confessed that I did so voluntarily. I now insist that the subject be changed, since I also insist that you have shown yourself unable to treat it with either good sense or common courtesy. Pray let us never refer to it again."

He bit his lip, and his mild eyes flashed a little. But I had imposed silence upon him as regarded a single topic, however wounded my uncompromising words had made him feel. But I too had been deeply wounded, and that single word "madness," applied to a man whose brain was so collected and equable as I realized my own always to have been, wrought upon me for a long time afterward like the residuary sting of an insult.

## V.

A coolness now ensued between Demotte and myself, lasting for several weeks. Certain affairs, however, relating to real-estate investments in which we were mutually interested brought us periodically together, and at last I broke the ice with one stout blow. Our acquaintance, I told him, would be impossible on these distant and formal terms. We must either become fully reconciled or we must once and for all separate.

A kind of terror came into Floyd Demotte's face as he listened to



me. I felt then how much he cherished my friendship. He almost burst into tears a moment later, and while seizing my hand in his own declared quite brokenly that he had been to blame, and yet that his admonition and his prophecy, ill advised though both might have appeared, had had the one excuse of warm and profound regard.

"Well," I said, pressing his hand with a smile, "I'm glad you don't think, after all, that I am the threatened victim of madness."

"No. That was only a dread which flashed upon me, and at a moment's warning, as it were. There seems to be so ominous, darksome and despotic a 'no thoroughfare' lifted above the misty border-line of infinity! One might indeed fancy that any mere mortal who presumptuously crossed it would leave not so much hope as reason behind him!"

"Oh," was my laughing exclamation, notwithstanding that Demotte's words and his inflection of them had both touched me by their gravity and sombre candor, "I trust you won't accuse me of trying to overleap that border-line. Infinity is a very large word; in fact, it isn't in the dictionary of modern science at all; she only has what Herbert Spencer would call a symbolic conception of it."

"But the discovery of which you spoke?"

"You may be sure that if I am ever fortunate enough to make it, infinity will be no nearer to me in the end than was the western horizon to Columbus after he had put an ocean between himself and Spain."

"Some day you shall tell me of your plan and of how you expect to compass it," said Demotte. There was a faintly gleeful ring in his voice which he tried to repress. Our reconciliation gave him exquisite pleasure, I knew.

"Perhaps I will tell you," I said.

But I did not mean the words. I secretly felt that while my truly vast idea was in embryo, to describe would somehow be to desecrate it. I cannot remember just when its magnitude and originality first took full possession of my mind: if I mistake not, there was no single primal throb of conception preceding its clearer self-portrayal in thought. The entire process had, I think, been as gradual as the nourishment of a tree by rain. Still, thus far I had accomplished little. My experiments verifying Faraday's molecular theory with regard to electricity may have quickened in me the germ of my own far-different hypothesis. And yet when I consider how Faraday asserts that electricity has no existence whatever, but that the phenomena which we declare to be electrical are the result of properties and motions born of the molecules of matter themselves, I can hardly trace any analogy whatever between my peculiar conclusions and these broadly divergent premises. Still, it was, I think, undoubtedly a close study of the polarized condition of molecules that first turned my attention toward forces of human vitality—those subtle and amazing energies which exist either in the brain-tissues or the muscular anatomy of man—and so induced that primary and almost intuitive train of argument. However this may be, I had found myself absorbed in meditations on the one supremely attractive question of why and how, from the invisible



nerve-centres of cerebral efficiency, motor and sensory qualifications are forever springing. Schopenhauer's assertion of the "will to live" pushing itself up from the unknown into a million forms of organic and inorganic matter had strangely charmed without by any means convincing me; for what, after all, is Schopenhauer but a magnificent autocrat in philosophy? and, hotly as he hates the mysticism of all his German *confrères* except Kant, how dreamily German is the real foundation of his superb "Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung"! Still, that incomparable potency which we see manifested in the winking of an eyelid, in the giving to man a poem like "Hamlet," or in the generalship that won Austerlitz, might all be the same as regards kind. I began more than deeply to ponder this element of invariable similitude pervading all human action, whether physical or mental. If it all rose from a single vital principle, I asked myself, why should this vital principle not be understood, in time, at least as well as electricity is understood now? If, as some physicists would have us credit, all life is dependent upon a certain electro-magnetic force in nature, why might not the cogency which causes me to walk across my laboratory, from a Leyden jar in one corner of it to a torsion electrometer in another corner of it, be akin with that which sends a translatable message across three thousand leagues of sea? Is electricity, I again asked myself, really light, heat and all known power? Then why is it not intelligence—human intelligence as well—brought into contact with those cells of the brain which are otherwise effete as a stone or a log?

It is impossible for me here to elucidate the scientific origin of my early investigations. This demands not merely an intimate knowledge of the higher mathematics, such as I myself possessed, but it also requires an acquaintance with the technical processes and nomenclature employed by trained adepts in other kindred studies. Still, it is my intention to write out, as a faithful appendix of these memoirs, every detail of the calculations and deductions by which I arrived at my present unmatched place among the loftiest thinkers of this or any period. Such a statement may sound like vanity; but how far from the least semblance of vanity actually it is, posterity shall both learn and admit. I do not advance this belief. I declare it.

Meanwhile, I persevered with my experiments, and Demotte at the same time frankly deported himself as once more my devoted friend. I would occasionally accompany him in his pilgrimages to the book-shops, though I satirized his mania with a persistence of ridicule which he always bore good-naturedly. One day he said to me,—

"If you cared for good books, Douglas, I would ask you to go with me where we could see them in really splendid profusion."

"Good books!" I cried. "Oh, how amusingly you collectors abuse terms! Good books are books good enough to read for ideas they contain, not for the archaic suggestions of their print and bindings. . . But where is this treasure-house to which you refer, Floyd?"

"It is a private dwelling in Clinton Place; its proprietor is named Adam Hadley."

"That name is somehow familiar," I said.

"No doubt. Hadley has compiled a most exhaustive biographical

cyclopædia of prominent Americans, from the early colonial times until now."

A day or two later Demotte and I crossed the threshold of Adam Hadley's residence. Clinton Place was once the placid domain of Knickerbocker respectability, but now sign-boards of a hundred varying sorts obtruded their commercial gilt over door-ways and windows. The Hadley house, with its antiquated arch of entrance and the pervasive suggestion of having its bricks joined together by mortar at least fifty years old, had once risen among many prim companions, of marked resemblance each to each. But the quarter was fatally near Broadway; trade had unmercifully pushed westward toward University Place, invading chambers that for many years had been almost sanctified by the sweetest domestic privacies. Adam Hadley's house now stood quite deserted by its former highly reputable associates. On one side of it sprawled the immense advertisement of a Franco-American *café*, which had a basement where lager beer and absinthe were equally distributed to customers, and an upper story where a *table-d'hôte* dinner at sixty cents, with wine included, offered bewildering attractions. On the other side flared a balcony whose colossal gold letters assured even the most languid passer that "*Robes et Manteaux*" were here procurable. Just across the street gleamed the windows of a restaurant in which you saw uncooked beef-steaks and sanguinary mutton-chops made spectacular with bunches of crisp-leaved and marble-stalked celery, not to speak of scarlet lobsters brilliantly effete on plinths of dripping ice. Clinton Place had unquestionably become mercantile. But Adam Hadley's house remained just as drowsy and dignified as when quiescence and not turmoil was the key-note of its neighborhood. I had no sooner gone into the front drawing-room with Demotte than I began to understand how justly he had described the whole exceptional interior. Here was the old-fashioned American "parlor," and yet all the coignes of vantage which our grandfathers and grandmothers loved to fill with wax flowers in glass cases, or possibly with a stuffed bird or two from tropic climes, were unrelentingly invaded by books. Books confronted you everywhere. The walls were lined with them half-way toward the ceiling, in row after row. A large central table was piled with folios; on the floor, close against the lower shelves of the book-cases rose piles of large volumes which no private library could well find accommodation for. And presently Mr. Hadley himself appeared, welcoming Demotte with an outstretched hand that made me think of nothing so much as of a wrinkled leather book-binding. His face was somehow the shape of a book; I have never seen so square a face, nor one so preternaturally solemn. He had a little bent figure, and the dull eyes under his tired, drooped lids bore a sluggish, inky blackness that recalled a large blurred O in imperfect print. He somehow seemed a part of his books; his clothes were dusty and his shirt-cuffs revealed the slight raggedness at their edges which easily reminded one of a book's uncut leaf. He talked with Demotte of books, only books, for nearly twenty minutes, as I may conscientiously assert, before giving me more than a faint recognition of the acquaintance which our friend had duly established between us. He had a little dry laugh, like the crackle of a stiff book-page when

you turn it quickly, and he used this laugh a good many times while he told my friend of an extraordinary *trouvaille*, a wonderful bargain, which had lately befallen him in John Street, or Ann Street, or some "down-town" quarter like that. I am quite ignorant of the whole singular and unexplainable cult, but, unless I mistake, Mr. Hadley was boasting that he had procured a Horace or an Ovid in *petit format*, or something of this nature, with the Elzevir date of 1629. Demotte shook his head a good many times, declaring the lucky windfall a clear impossibility. I was greatly bored, and began taking some of the beautifully-bound volumes from their resting-places and examining them. Presently Mr. Hadley asked me if I cared for books, but in so wandering a way that I felt the question to have been somehow stimulated by a whispered suggestion on the part of Demotte. I was about to answer the little desiccated individual, when he suddenly put one yellow hand on my friend's shoulder and pointed to the next room. In the next room, where rows of books presented themselves just as amply as before and piles of folios were still more frequent, the priceless little duodecimo about which this tedious wrangle had been waged was finally produced and shown. Demotte eyed it at certainly twenty different angles of vision, and after twice confidently stating it to be spurious at last declared it genuine. A new way of regarding it, however, appeared to rouse his doubt once more; and then, losing patience, I rather explosively said,—

"For heaven's sake, Floyd, do show *me* a little pity! You know I can't sympathize with the mysteries of your bibliomania. Do ask Mr. Hadley to let us have a glimpse of some rare engravings. I shan't feel quite so barbaric then; I've an eye for that sort of thing, as you know."

My appeal was listened to, and soon afterward we were brought in contact with so many tomes of quaint, skilful or beautiful pictures that even a cursory inspection of them would have lasted well beyond nightfall. It was not long before I observed that Demotte was letting his glance roam restlessly and perhaps expectantly in the direction of the doors. He anticipated another picture far finer than any which these book-covers could reveal. And it presently appeared in one of the door-ways.

I had heard Demotte say that old Adam Hadley lived here in Clinton Place with a daughter who was his only child, and also that Millicent Hadley was pretty. But I had no suspicion of what a charming face and figure this lifeless little reference failed to describe. Millicent's blue eyes gave the effect of always swimming in a delicious silvery light, and her lovely, silky hair, growing profusely on her small head that had the swift grace of a bird's in moving, was tawny as a rusted leaf. Or possibly there would be truth no less than comedy in contrasting the tinge with her father's leathern little hands. It amazed you to think of this ethereal and blooming young creature as having sprung from parentage whose personality was so entirely unlike her own; you wondered if the dead mother of Millicent had not transmitted to her all this feminine felicity of *personnel*, all these pure, fresh graces of lineament. Millicent Hadley's gowns were surely made by

no fashionable milliner, and yet her slender, flexible, maidenly shape wore them with a sweet ease quite her own. She seemed to love her father dearly, but the more I watched her the more I felt certain as to her possessing a nature of such inherent womanly ardors that to love some one clingingly and satisfyingly was her spiritual necessity. She was by no means of a spiritual turn in her conversation; she spoke freely, openly, and with that happy abandonment which so many American girls employ to the grieved astonishment of English or French conventionalism. Her father incessantly observed her with an indulgent fondness which there was no mistaking. As soon as she appeared he gave evidence of the most pronounced paternal pride in her. It was an exquisite enjoyment to me as I studied the complete surrender which Adam Hadley indicated the moment she assumed her amiable and easily-borne office of hostship. She made me think of a wood-anemone blossoming in the dark cloisters of an almost sunless forest. And yet her tender individual traits of modesty were combined with a playful assertiveness that robbed them of anything like awkward constraint. A little later she went with us through not a few other rooms of the house, all so crowded by volumes that I began to look on this as a phenomenal sort of library containing everything printed since printing began its enlightenments for the race.

Millicent's talk was meanwhile buoyant and engaging. She treated her father's passion for collecting books as if it were a foible no less innocuous than droll.

"I often wonder how I've managed to keep my health in this damp, sleepy old house," she exclaimed, "so packed with the records of dead writers. But fortunately papa sent me to boarding school in Poughkeepsie for about three years. That saved me, I suppose, from becoming a victim of brooding melancholy."

"You don't look at all melancholy," I said. "Is it only due to the boarding-school that you don't?"

"I'm afraid it is," struck in Hadley, with humorous despair. "She calls this house a graveyard. Just think of that!"

"Well," laughed Demotte, "it's a graveyard with some very interesting head-stones."

"You get tired, after a while, of reading the head-stones," cried Millicent airily:

"But one can always pull them up, so to speak," I said, "and find out what lies beneath."

"And what *does* lie beneath?" the girl exclaimed, looking full at me with her curiously winsome eyes. "Nothing but dead people, after all."

We were passing, just then, through one of the upper halls. She led the way, moving along with her brisk, elastic step, and I chanced to be just behind her. Lowering my voice a little, and almost without knowing wherefore, I said,—

"Do you prefer live people?"

She turned her face toward me so that I caught with a new effect of shade or color the rose-leaf lines of her cheek and temple. "Yes," she answered. "I prefer them with all my heart."

"And do you meet and know many of them?" I pursued.

"Oh, *so* few!" was her swift answer. "I live a great deal alone. There's papa, of course, and then there are one or two servants."

"And there are no friends, no acquaintances, even?"

"Hardly any. I never went to school, you know, in the way that most New York girls go. Papa taught me at first, and then there was boarding-school; and after that came the home-life again, with all my old girl-friends scattered about in various places away from New York."

"And you have no friends of another kind?" I asked, with a persistence that struck me as ill advised and a trifle aggressive, notwithstanding that I made use of it.

She understood me with a little tender, hurrying, pink blush. "Oh, no. Except one."

"Mr. Demotte."

"Yes."

"And he impresses you favorably?"

She made me no answer. Just at this moment we had reached the door-way of a room where new rows and piles of books were visible. During the rest of our visit Millicent bestowed on me, I fancied, less geniality than previously. I hated to feel that I had perhaps offended her by too overt a familiarity. This thought, amounting to a dread for which I could by no means account, remained with me for several hours after I had quitted her society. As its annoying force wore away, I began to tell myself that to meet her again might result in something very like a declaration of passion. I had never seen and talked with any woman thus far in my life whom I so thoroughly longed to see and talk with again. Her face stole between me and my studies during the next week. I had a strong disinclination to inform Demotte of the rapid enchantment she had exerted. At the same time he exhibited what I secretly pronounced a strange reticence concerning her. Had Millicent already so won his love that my own admiration of her displeased him? No, I soon concluded; for if this were true he would betray chagrin, or at least some sort of lurking resentment. But neither manifestation remotely touched his demeanor, and after a fortnight or so he himself proposed that we should pay another visit at the house in Clinton Place.

I went with him more gladly than I chose to evince. Her reception of us both was gracious in the extreme, but I noticed signs of intimacy in her manner toward Demotte which implied that their acquaintanceship had probably gone on ripening since I had last seen them together. Her father was not present, that day; indisposition prevented him from leaving his own room. The doctor had assured Millicent that he did not think it at all a serious illness, and yet while she repeated to us this cheerful medical judgment there was a cloudy light in her eyes that needed no explanation; and presently she confessed to us, with a candor full of pathos, that she had tried for weeks to keep from her mind the saddening certainty of her father's broken health. "It is so dreadful, you know," she said, "for me to think that I should be quite alone if anything *should* happen to him! It doesn't merely make me love him the more; it mixes a continual fear with my love, . . if . . if . ." (and



now, for some reason, her look wandered to my own and dwelt there a few seconds) "if you can understand how such a strange state of feeling can exist."

"I understand very well," was my swift answer.

If Demotte had not been there, that day, I believe I might have shown the pity I felt by means of a decidedly passionate method. It was of no use to warn myself that I had seen this girl but once before. I had seen her a hundred times since first looking upon her; she seemed already to have filmed all the sombre surface of my life with light, though we were still unquestionably strangers. After that day I made no concealment of my admiration from Demotte. But I did not tell him I loved Millicent Hadley. Shame kept me from this admission; with men of my frigid intellectual calibre the self-surrender to love's divine folly will sometimes give the sense of being arraigned by all the august faculties of reason, while common-sense, like a fussy little recording clerk seated beside his superiors, adds to the general grim effect of accusation. But if I had really divulged my love to Demotte, all that afterward happened would have forever remained as a sealed book. He himself, as I soon found out, loved Millicent profoundly. With a nature of such jealousy as his own, once to be sure that we were rivals would have meant life-long estrangement.

But it never seemed to enter Floyd Demotte's head that we were or ever could be rivals. I failed, at first, to make out the cause of this dogged misinterpretation. Occasionally I grew desperate under it, and would let my praises of Millicent become as florid as a suitor's. But Demotte never appeared to suspect in the faintest way that their warmth was of the romantic flame. I visited the Clinton Place dwelling several times unaccompanied by him and not consulting him as to the question of going with me. He learned of these visits from Millicent herself, and treated them with a matter-of-course lightness. The more I brooded over his indifference to my attentions and at the same time realized how deep a sentiment he himself cherished for this charming girl, the more miserably unable I became to reconcile the first with the last. I was not by any means as personally well-favored as my friend; mine was indeed the expression of a brooding spirit, and one beset by some species of relentless unrest. Still, there was nothing repellent in my exterior; I neither looked like a woman-hater nor a cynic, and with no dream of boast I can state that a fair-minded observer could not have failed to discern in my visage that mental virility which it would be idly flippant for me to disclaim. From the worldly point of view, moreover, I was even more marriageable than Floyd Demotte, since my wealth counted considerably above his. After a long reflection I concluded that my friend's absolute faith in Millicent's attachment for him had formed the reason of his baffling behavior. And yet in this estimate I was destined soon to encounter my own error.

During our further interviews together Millicent had given me proof that seemed slowly to gather strength regarding her high valuation of Demotte's genial gallantries. He was the one subject which above all others she liked to discuss when I called upon her. Adam Hadley's illness had not yet abated, and repeatedly his daughter received me



alone in one of the lower rooms of his queer book-crammed abode. "She loves Demotte," I at length began to decide within my own darkening meditations. And as I drew this deduction from her words, her bearing, the livelier gleam of her enkindled eyes, and a score of tokens by which she would show plainly her concern in him who had first made us acquainted, it must be affirmed that a great suffering pierced me with its first pangs. I had no feeling of ordinary jealousy; I have never, in all that afterward happened, known torture of this peculiarly poignant kind. My sensations were then, and long continued to be, those of a penetrant and most desolating regret. My mind was too inflexibly logical to cast the least random and inconsistent blame upon either himself or her. In the whole unhappy affair I saw nothing except one of those perverse and cruel freaks for which destiny is alone accountable. Here was but a single episode of torment among the millions of others by which humanity has through ages been persecuted. It represented only one of the sorrowful mysteries for which earthly philosophy has no conceivable solvent—which have flung uncounted souls upon religion as a refuge and consolation, and which have left a comparative few (shall I say that mine was among this far slighter number?) who have risen up, defiant, challenging, and fiercely unappeased by all pious faith, even though such antagonism meant wildly vain warfare.

Still, in these early days of gathering misery I was not completely hopeless. After all, I might be mistaken. Millicent might not be irretrievably in love with Demotte, and he, on his side, might not yet have fully persuaded himself that she would marry him on the asking. Why, then, should I altogether despair of my own chances? Demotte's tardiness in perceiving the state of my heart toward the woman whom it seemed to me that he undoubtedly loved, might turn out of untold advantage in the future struggle between us; for I had got to expect a struggle as imminent, and I meant to push my part of it in all fairness but with all vigor. And thus I took hope.

I suddenly found myself quite at fault, however, in any such prophecies. There was to be no struggle. The full measure of my agony and defeat was to be dealt me by one abrupt circumstantial *coup de maître*.

Demotte appeared in my laboratory on a certain afternoon, just as I had determined to leave off the engrossing studies and exact experiments which had occupied me since an early hour in the morning. I was jaded and fatigued, but I knew of a way to refresh and fortify myself. It was a stimulant worth every elixir my chemical knowledge could point out to me, twenty times over. It was to jump in a cab and have myself driven down to Clinton Place, where the music of a voice and the magic of a smile precious beyond all other known pleasures were perhaps waiting my choice of summons.

The entrance of Demotte into the laboratory, whither he always came unannounced, gave me a sharp thrill of irritation. I had sunk listlessly into an arm-chair only a few minutes before. Rising, now, I strove to conceal the annoyance he had roused. For an instant I felt that I almost hated him; he had come at so wretchedly *malapropos* a time.

## VI.

But he was quite unconscious of not being thoroughly welcome. "You look tired," he said, after he had taken a seat near the easy-chair into which I had again thrown myself.

"I am a little tired," was my reply.

"My dear fellow, you've been overworking again."

"I'm always overworking," I returned, with a little laugh that could not have been very jocund. "No doubt I shall always continue to do so, until . . ."

I had paused, and Demotte, with a shake of the head, murmured, "Until you make that mighty discovery, I suppose. What a worshipper of science you are! I was talking about you hardly an hour ago."

"Talking about me?" I queried, with a start. I do not believe in premonitions or presentiments, naturally; we exact thinkers have a way of throwing all such trifles into a single rubbish-bin, labelled "superstition." But nevertheless a thrill that bore in it the shiver of positive fear now swept through me. "Well, Floyd, I hope you had pleasant things to say."

"Need I tell you that we did?"

"We? Who was the other?"

"Why, Millicent Hadley, of course."

"Your 'of course' is a little confusing, upon my word."

"Oh, it could hardly have been any one else,—because we have so few friends in common. And then"—here he looked at me as though there might be a chance of my wilfully playing with his credulity—"you know very well, Douglas, that Millicent cordially admires you."

That "cordially admires you" must have sent the blood from my cheeks, though Demotte did not observe that any such effect had been wrought by his perfectly unconscious patronage. My finger-nails began a little clicking tattoo, just here, on the carved sides of my chair; it cost me self-control to keep from making some sarcastic and even bitter reply. But, as it was, I merely said,—

"You have been seeing Miss Hadley to-day?"

"Yes."

"And you found nothing better than myself to talk about?"

"Nonsense, now, Douglas! Don't force me to tell you there is hardly anything so good."

'What a brute I am!' flashed through my thoughts. 'Here is a man who comes to me with the sweetest feelings of friendship in his heart, and I secretly desire to fly from him one minute and be rude to him the next.' Aloud I said to Demotte, almost aimlessly,—

"Miss Hadley is quite well?"

"Yes—very."

"And her father?"

"Worse, or something very like it. It certainly looks as if he wouldn't last much longer. He grows weaker, and sleeps more." Demotte dropped his eyes on the carpet, now, and spoke in a lingering,

musings voice. "She was feeling wretchedly blue about him, poor girl. She needed to be cheered up, if one only could think of a way . . ."

"And so you thought about me," I broke in. "That was certainly flattering. And Miss Hadley admires me, eh?"

"Of course she does. But——"

"Oh, there's a 'but,' is there?" I asked, and while the words left me I could feel my heart beat with sudden nervous throbs, and wondered whether my voice did not come near to betraying me by its undue tremors.

Demotte laughed. "No 'but' as regards her admiration, respect, liking, and all that. Certainly not. Perhaps I should not have used the little word at all. . . The truth is, we somehow got talking of your intellectuality, Douglas, and of the . . the coldness which goes with it—necessarily in most such cases, as we agreed."

"Coldness?" I repeated—and coldly enough, too.

"Yes. I don't mean—or, rather, Millicent and I didn't mean—that you are not human enough. It was about your—your susceptibility, you know.—Confound it!" Demotte suddenly broke off, "I'm almost sorry I mentioned the subject; explanations of this sort are sometimes so deucedly awkward."

"And did Miss Hadley give it as her opinion that I was cold, although she admitted me to be human?"

"Oh, look here, now, you're laughing at me—at us both!" cried Demotte.

"On the contrary, I haven't the least inclination to laugh," I answered, though my voice was warily schooled not to sound too serious as I spoke these words.

"Oh, well, then," said Demotte, still eying me doubtfully, "it can all be summed up in this: I hazarded the theory that you were not a man who would ever care enough for any woman to marry her, and Millicent didn't by any means deny it. And really, Douglas, you won't deny it, either, I'm almost certain."

"It would appear to be useless," I replied, "since you have settled the matter."

"No, we haven't," exclaimed Demotte, now sure that I was complaisant and far from satirical. "Indeed, poor Millicent—whose experience, you know, in all such affairs must have come to her simply from the romances that she has read—gave as an after-thought that you were just the kind of man who might some day fall violently and savagely in love." Demotte now laughed with extreme heartiness. "That horoscope, my dear fellow, struck me as a very funny one to draw for you."

"And why, if you please?"

"Why? It called up such an absurd picture of you! I saw you in imagination feeling your own pulse with dignified amazement. I fancied I could see you putting your delicious frenzy, as it were, under a microscope and tabulating the separate waves of heat produced by it, according to their momentum and velocity."

"Ah, now I do perceive that you must think me very cold," I said, and I said it with a great deal of coldness, rising at the same time.

Demotte hurried toward me. He insisted on taking my hand in his own, and his look flashed a real repentance into mine while he hastily addressed me.

"There! you are offended, Douglas. I beg you to pardon what I meant in idle joke. Idle, but not malicious. I never am the last; you'll give me credit to that extent, I'm sure. I have my oddities and my bad flaws—no one realizes this more fully than I do myself; but I don't wound people deliberately or mischievously—no, never. You may be a sleeping volcano under all that equanimity of yours, dear friend. I hope, if you are, that your fires will some day find the proper vent. And then I'll congratulate you with . . . well, with three cheers and a 'tiger'—no one more sincerely, depend on it. I'm prepared to think the world of any woman you should set your heart upon. And she must conform with a rather high standard, too, if she wants me to believe she's worthy of you. There, now, don't maintain that solemn look, or I shall believe you haven't forgiven me."

"There is nothing at all for me to forgive, Floyd," I said; and having gained this closer view of his face I saw that he was tremulously excited.

He caught my other hand and held it as he had been holding its mate throughout the delivery of his recent eager sentences. "Ah, that is the right way to talk!" he cried. "God knows I don't want to quarrel with you on this day, of all days! I'm so fond of you that the thought of a quarrel between us is always hateful to me—but on this day it's especially so. . . I wonder, now, if you can guess why I speak as I'm doing. Perhaps you see that I'm happy. Perhaps you read it in my face. Well, then, if you do, as your nod tells me that you do, can you guess what has made me happy?"

"I think that I can." As these words fell from me my heart seemed like a burden of lead in my bosom.

"You mean that—that Millicent has made me happy? Don't you mean that, Douglas?"

If I had dreamed he was not utterly unaware of the torture he inflicted, how I should have flung the clasp of his warm hands away from my own! But he was unaware of it—absolutely ignorant and innocent of doing anything except giving me an agreeable little surprised shock. So I steeled myself into saying, with only an air of amicable interest,—

"Yes, I mean that. And I'm right, I suppose?"

"Of course you are! It came about this afternoon. She was speaking of her father's illness, and her voice broke a little. I never have been quite sure that she loved me until then. All your science, Douglas, could never just explain the peculiar intuition of that moment. Her eyes swam in tears, and a light stole out of them that was like some direct and exquisite tidings to me. I don't think I even asked her if she did love me; I took it rapturously for granted. . . And now we're engaged. I want our marriage to be soon; I greatly hope that it will be soon. Nor, as I find with delight, is Millicent averse to its being so. . . But you have not wished me joy, Douglas. I know that you do wish me joy. Still, I'm capricious—

tyrannical, if you please. I want you to be the first who shall tell me that I've chosen wisely. . . ."

Somehow I managed to acquit myself with the requisite amount of calm hypocrisy before Demotte left me that day. After he had gone I recall passing into a room which adjoined my laboratory proper, and which I had fitted up as a sort of scientific library and study, with not a few well-filled book-shelves and the latest reviews, American and foreign, that bore relation to the subjects I so preferred. The weather was early May, mild, yet with a delicious pulse of fresh, resistant breeze. I opened a window and sank into a seat beside it, leaning my breast against its ledge while I looked down upon the multiform and murmurous city from my rather dizzy attic height. A drowsy purplish haze—that light, fair prophecy of our awakening spring—gleamed at the verge of the horizon; the sky itself, already just ethereally touched with evening and no more, curved in delicate blue above me, so much purer by contrast with the big, impure city it overbrowed. . . . A great sigh passed my lips. Here I sat, with what millions of envious fellow-creatures would doubtless be willing to admit was all the world before me—with abundant wealth, with education, with a frame whose vigor promised longevity, and yet with an immitigable wretchedness at my heart. Demotte's freedom from jealousy was no longer unaccounted for. He had cared nothing at all about my being thrown with Millicent. I had been thoroughly "safe," so to speak; I would never marry, in all likelihood; my science was absorption, concentration, devotion, for me. . . . Ah! how blind I had been not to have detected in him this trend and bias of complete misjudgment! I clinched my hands together as I thought of how I might have prevented by very direct means any similar fallacy in *her*. Who could say that this idea of my frigid and loveless intellectuality might not have been changed into something widely opposite, if only I had known a little earlier of its existence in Millicent's mind? Would that I *had* known it! . . . And now a vast blank swept before me, the other distant blank of death blending with it, as mist of ocean with mist of sky. Of all living women none could be to me what Millicent Hadley might have been. I had never loved before; I would never love again—or, rather, I would never again cease to love. The expression of a great passion in bare, bald, literal prose is such a temptation of the commonplace. I cannot write of the depth of my disappointment without somehow seeming to invite the shallowness of metaphors which may do no more than hint its ardor and its anguish alike. So many human bipeds have suffered just as I suffered then! If all the dead and buried hopes, once vital with longing as mine had been, could have their tombs visibly and tangibly shown, what new acres of graveyard this ill-ordered and woe-laden planet would be found to contain!

Demotte had perhaps rightly stated of me that I was a man to put my delicious frenzy under a microscope. But alas! when it thus gave me ecstasy instead of sorrow I did not know of any microscope under which to put it. My inductive reasoning had stood bewildered before it. It was a part of me; it had slipped into my being; it flung a quiet and perpetual scoff against all my training in axiom, formula, analysis, logic, experiment. It meant a boundary-line at which the dis-



sective postures that I sought became limp and aidless gropings. I had paused before its thwarting repulsion as fact while it was still a novel and unforeseen intoxication as sentiment. But now, when it had taken the dark outline of despair, I continued to confront it as the baffled man of science and not as the usual complaisant martyr. I wanted to take my pain in my hand and scrutinize it, subject it to laws, treat it as a surgeon would treat the dreadful though fascinating blight of a cancer whose gnaw and bane taunted him with their yet ungrasped arguments of decay. And all such mode of dealing was so dreadfully impossible! Science, I had long ago told myself, would one day reach the pith and kernel of its cause. But science as yet, with her undoubted wonders of accomplishment, had done so little!

I think there was never yet a man as strangely a sufferer from what we call heart-break, as I, Douglas Duane, at this particular moment of my solitude and distress. Every old tradition of the being who bows himself beneath the blow of unrequited love was in my case rendered unprecedentedly null. I did not weep or mourn; I strained at my bonds and longed to learn from what nameless element they had been forged. Always incredulous and rebellious where the tenets of an optimistic belief were concerned, I was now a non-conformist of the fiercest type. I felt myself siding with John Stuart Mill in his declaration that the powers of the air are perhaps equally divided—into angels and demons. The wide, dreamy hum of the encompassing city grew to my ears like a great roar of threat as I leaned a little further across the ledge of the window. "If we are really the sport and jest of deity," I mused, "how easy is it to end the sport and let the jest be laughed out! How numberless are the doors of escape for those who would really fly from life's rigors! And death is annihilation of consciousness, though it may not be of force."

I looked at the pavements, many scores of feet beneath me. If I were to leap down upon them I would die as I touched them. Why not do it, without another instant of premeditation? Suppose that for a few fleet seconds the pain were terrific; what would be the direst throes it could inflict beside such visitations of forlorn disheartenment as the coming years would multiply and prolong?

'You believe in no future for the soul,' said a voice which seemed to come from that very source I had so resolutely denied. 'Or, if you accede to the soul's vital entity at all, you have become convinced that it is impersonal, unindividual as the twilight breeze that now blows upon your face. Possess yourself of the one supreme prize attainable to all on whom an inevitable dower of unhappiness has descended. Lay to your wounds the one sure and eternal balm. Cheat disaster by drinking of the Lethe to which all must sooner or later bend their lips.'

I rose from my chair. For one brief flash of time I tingled with the suicide's true headlong madness. I pushed the chair close to the wainscot below the window, and then sprang upon it, a second afterward setting one foot upon the ledge against which I had just been leaning. I meant—firmly and infallibly meant—to dash myself into the street below. And then, as I cast my gaze downward once more, a sensation which I shall never forget, though I should live a thousand



years, darted through every nerve. It was not any qualm of cowardice, nor was it at all akin to intimidation. Completely the opposite of either, it seized me with untold power. I almost reeled from the chair, lifting both hands to my whirling head. . . I seemed to see with a piercing and acute prescience into my own unlived days. A certainty of something which I might achieve—something at once awful and unprecedented—glared before my inner vision in lines of blinding light. . . I must have staggered forward and then fallen; for afterward, when an abrupt, blurring daze had rushed over me and subsided, I found myself prone on the soft rug of the floor, and was aware that one temple had been slightly bruised.

Of what weird stuff had my strange ecstasy, hallucination, besieging fantasy, been wrought? What extraordinary and portentous revelation had burst upon me? I could not respond to the questions with which my clearing brain now taxed its own depths. At the same time a misty perception of the truth still remained, faint as though it were a last pulse born of some mighty vibration. . . Again, the rationalist within me made all this glamour of mysticism appear folly that deserved scoff alone; and always, in such sceptical moods, I explained on solely physiological grounds the whole anomalous occurrence. But my suicidal impulse had vanished from that hour. I had now no disinclination whatever to live on and stoically face the future.

## VII.

In the following autumn Adam Hadley breathed his last. The leaves of his life had, so to speak, been turned very tranquilly over, one by one, and at length *finis* had been reached without a whit more hurry than at the beginning of the book. I had seen Millicent frequently during the summer that preceded her father's death. We were ostensibly the best of friends. I had no reason to imagine that she dimly surmised my own love for her. I masked every trace of it, though not under anything like reserve. That task would have eclipsed my capabilities. I was never less reserved, never more expansive and voluble, than when in her company. I knew that she had pronounced me much more amusing than she had previously supposed me to be; Demotte had come to me one day with this bit of tidings fresh from her lovely lips. He no doubt thought it would diffuse an especial cheer and gladness, having jovially informed me, not long ago, that Millicent had "really taken a great liking to me." But these words had been merely a dagger to stab me with. I had grown, after a fashion, quite used to such wounds, by this; I received, as a rule, at least one each day. But in the very teeth of such mockery as that I was amusing to Millicent, I continued my uncharacteristic buoyancy and volatility. It was a sort of incessant acted part with me, and of necessity its performance took me out of myself. If I had had to present myself before this woman whom I loved as perpetually the man who loved her to distraction and who concealed his adoration under the mantle of a sober restraint, I should soon have found my *rôle* insupportable. After all, there may have been a dreary, left-handed triumph, too, in the gra-

cious approval she gave me. Even such a hopeless attachment as mine has its vanities no less than its despairs. Yet the former, if such a name befitted them, brought me but a shadowy contentment. They were like nothing so much as the mere vapory mirage of a paradise forever lost! And, like the mirage, they would soon fade. I had resolved upon peremptorily banishing the chill, thin phantom of their comfort.

My mind was made up on the subject of permanently leaving New York as a place of residence. I had almost determined, at one time, on making Europe my future home. But considerations relating to my large property here at length altered this intention. Since my return from abroad I had sojourned for a few weeks in Washington. The agreeable climate of our capital, combined with its attributes of social vivacity and brilliancy, had greatly won my taste. Society like that of Washington, with its cosmopolitan latitude and its necessitated freedom from sillier caprices of unrepubli- can caste, appealed to me forcibly. It would be pleasant to live near that *bariolé* throng, I had decided, even if one never participated in either its merry or its more grave modes of enjoyment. And so, after some deliberation, I had concluded to purchase a house on Pennsylvania Avenue, and to make, for at least a few years, Washington my fixed head-quarters.

Demotte's marriage with Millicent had been arranged to take place in the month following Mr. Hadley's death. I longed to escape the ordeal of witnessing this marriage, but my friend would, as I well knew, have met with grieved amaze any announcement on my own part that I contemplated an absence from the ceremony. True, I could have torn myself away at the last moment. But might not such a step, in consideration of Demotte's deep regard for me, have given him his first true glimpse of what I had long so successfully hidden? And I had now a wretched kind of pride in wearing my mask till the end. How humiliating if at this late hour it should fall from the dejection and infelicity it had thus far capably shielded! No, I would stay; I would stay on, till the bitter end.

And bitter it indeed was! Demotte had actually no real friend save myself. His retiring disposition was the sole cause of this. He might, with his name and place in the metropolitan whirl of things, have gathered about him hosts of intimate associates. But he had chosen otherwise, or rather his nature had chosen for him. And so the wedding, when it finally occurred at Grace Church, one rainy November morning, was private in the extreme. There were not, I think, more than fifteen people in the dim, reposeful interior of the beautiful and memory-haunted little church on Broadway, when Millicent Hadley became Millicent Demotte. Nearly all these people, I was well aware, Demotte would have preferred away; but imperative considerations of kinship had made their presence almost indispensable. Most of them, I fancied, looked on the match as a wofully bad one for so matrimonial a *parti* as their first-, second- or third-cousin. Adam Hadley had not been a person of the least consequence from their Knickerbocker point of patrician judgment. They were Ten Eycks and Vanderveers and Van Dams, and persons of that exalted Dutch extraction. (Ah! if they could only have seen in the flesh some of the dead Dutch grand-

fathers they were so proud of!) Adam Hadley had left his big library, it was true, which might or might not go off well at auction, provided his posthumous son-in-law did not philologically retain it. But what else had he left? Merely a few thousands of dollars, perhaps. And Floyd—their Floyd—with his clean twenty thousand a year and his irreproachable “position,” ought to have taken some girl of his own caste, provided he did not take one with a weighty and all-exonerating dower. So they either addressed me or seemed to address me—I am not just sure which it was. I felt too indifferent to their sanction or non-sanction of the nuptials for the cultivation of any accurate observance of either. I only remembered and realized, that day, the almost epical sorrow it brought me. Millicent looked angelic in her satin and her pearls. . . . Afterward, at her home, I saw her for a little while, in her travelling-dress. Her eyes were sparkling; a wild-rose color dwelt in her cheeks; she gave me her hand at farewell and said some gay, sweet, timid words that just suited the bride she had become. I hated the words, they were so agonizingly friendly, so distressingly appreciative. I tried to forget them afterward, as I tried to forget Demotte’s warm hand-clasp at the carriage-door when he and his wife were about starting on that mysterious voyage into transient obscurity which we call a wedding-tour. . . .

It was over at last, and I felt miserably relieved to think that it was. I endeavored at once to absorb myself in preparations for my departure. I had already hinted to Demotte that Washington would be henceforth the city of my abode, but he had received from me no distinct assurance to that effect. As it was, I wished that on his return to New York with his wife he might find me departed.

And yet an obstacle to this course presented itself unexpectedly. To pack my precious and frangible instruments would involve both time and care. But just at this period other matters, which concerned the management of my estate, were forced upon my attention. The departure must be set forward, since my lawyers would not grant me postponement of their special claims upon both my leisure and my umpireship. And so it happened that on the return of Mr. and Mrs. Demotte I was still in New York.

It gave me a good deal of surprise to learn, after their arrival, that the little basement-house in Second Avenue was not to be exchanged for a smarter or more centrally located dwelling. “Yes,” Demotte answered me, as we sat in his small smoking-room together one evening during the very week of their return; “we think we shall be rather more comfortable here than in any finer or larger house.”

“But I thought you would mix a little in the world,” I said. “I don’t just know what gave me the idea. I had it, however. And having it, I suppose that I instinctively invested your domestic air with an influence of dances and dinners.”

Demotte gave a sharp start, and then shifted almost petulantly in his chair. “Dances and dinners?” he muttered. “You recall, Douglas, how I detest them?”

“Well,” I laughed, “you’ve not much room for the former, however you might feel about the latter. And your wife’s mourning needn’t

interfere with at least some such occasional festivity—that is, after a few more weeks have gone by.”

Demotte looked at me with a sudden anxiety. “My dear Douglas,” he exclaimed, “I hope you won’t say a word of this sort to Millicent?”

“Of course not,” I returned. “Why should I?”

He sank backward in his chair, and used his cigar with a suggestion of appeased disturbance. “Why should you, truly? For no reason, none in the world. . . Look here, my good friend, I don’t at all want Millicent to mingle in society. I don’t like society. I rather shrink from it, as you’re aware. We shall be very happy down here in this little hiding-place of ours, I don’t doubt. That is, if you will drop in upon us occasionally, and dine, and prove our nice, faithful chum. Whenever you do appear you’ll be immensely welcome; I ought not even to tell you that, Douglas; you must feel so sure of it already. But gadding about among the Toms, Dicks and Harrys of gay life—not a bit of it, thank you! And to have these frivolous people at one’s own house means to show up ceremonially at theirs. No, I wish to keep Millicent from all that humbug. And I am almost certain she hasn’t the least possible liking for it. I should be very sorry if I thought she had.”

“She was very quietly brought up,” I said, looking at the wall. “That can’t be denied.”

“No; you’re right. It can’t; it certainly can’t. She imbibed quiet household notions from her girlish training. So much the better. That was one of her great charms for me. I sometimes think it was why such a homespun, retiring fellow as I am should ever have asked her to marry me at all. Those books, filling nearly every room of that Clinton Place house where she was born and reared, have had their gentle, composing effect upon her.” He turned toward me at this point in his rapid succession of sentences, looking at me with an eagerness of inquiry for which I was somehow not unprepared. “Don’t you agree with my views?” he queried. “Don’t you think I take a perfectly fair estimate of Millicent’s tranquil and simple tendencies?”

“Oh, yes,” I said. “And about the library her father left. You haven’t room for it here, have you?”

“Not as it was stowed by her father,” he quickly responded. “But there are a good many books I don’t particularly care for. There will be space for those I want on these shelves” (he waved one hand toward the low bookcases on almost every side of him) “and up-stairs in my library proper. It’s wonderful what accommodation for books we can get by building our shelves a foot or two higher. . . As for the other books—those I don’t care for—I have two unused rooms here in my attic where I shall store them—pile them up, I may say, from floor to ceiling. You understand just what I mean, eh?”

I did not, by any means. The library of Adam Hadley had been a superb one. This little basement-house in Second Avenue was in no manner fitted adequately to unfold its treasures. If Demotte had bought or hired a residence that contained one or two apartments large enough for their worthy disposition, such an act would have been wholly in keeping with the bibliophile that he was. The plan which

he now informed me of seemed in every way different from what any one who knew him as well as I knew him would have thought that he stood the least chance of adopting.

But a little later the whole truth burst upon me. That jealousy which I had before observed in him when it was merely relative to his friendship had now asserted an entirely new strength of manifestation. He loved Millicent as just such a man as he was could only love. He abhorred the idea of permitting her to associate with either men or women who were her equals, her rightful companions. He desired that she should be immured down there in the Second Avenue home, and that I, whom he deemed so harmless and so entirely exempt from his tyrannic aims and ordinations, should henceforth become the sole intimate associate of his wife and himself.

This struck me as a new satiric stroke on the part of my peculiar destiny. I began to look upon my departure for Washington as indefinitely deferred. Millicent always had such a warm and sweet smile waiting for me! Why, after all, should I go? As wide a gulf stretched between us here as that which miles of intervening distance could make.

Besides, a new condition of affairs had sprung up between herself and me. I represented all the human intercourse outside of that with her own husband which she was permitted unmolestedly to enjoy. All other she must secure for herself, either in the teeth of protest or in the shadow of its frown. By the time that her first few months of more funereal mourning-gear had expired, she naturally sought to become on better terms with her husband's relatives. They had all paid visits of formality and etiquette upon her, but she wished to know at least some of them in a far different way. Floyd Demotte promptly developed, however, a *mauvaise langue* of the cruellest sort in speaking of his kindred. Oh, Millicent certainly could never stand his aunt Vanderveer; she was a most autocratic and restricted being; she thought every branch of necessary knowledge was to be found among the branches of her family tree. . . . And Townsend Ten Eyck? Ah, he was such a dense popinjay; if he meant anything, it was the American snob in full flower; it used to be said of him that he had one eating sorrow in life, namely, that he hadn't been born either the Duke of New York or the Earl of Manhattan. . . . Those two Van Dam girls, with their bangs, and their simper, and their eye-glasses chronically flying up to their little yellow-lashed eyes? They were frivolity in burlesque; they would never do for more than ten minutes at a time; to tire of them was to remember that a practical day only consisted, after all, of twelve hours. . . . And so on, in highly uncharitable epigram, till poor Millicent realized that every name on the rather limited list had a relentless black mark set over against it. But her loyalty to her husband continued as unshaken as her love. She made no attempt to quarrel with his edicts of intolerance. It seemed to sadden her that he should have been so unfortunate as regarded those with whom the bonds of blood connected him. Whatever doubts his assertions may have awakened she kept hidden behind a meek and sweet tranquillity. Still, her disappointment was evident to me. I felt confident that she had



expected, in marrying Demotte, a change from the old eventless monotony of previous years. The girl in her nature was not yet annulled; it might not be for a long time henceforth. She had married wretchedly for one to whom repressions like these were irksome. She was still devoted to her husband. As I watched them together I marvelled at the unweakened stability of her fondness. Here again was presented to me one of the incongruous features of our mundane lot. Floyd Demotte, wholly undeserving of such allegiance, nevertheless received it as though it were his rightful due. And I—well, my thoughts would sometimes be intentionally broken off and restrained when I slipped toward the drawing of a parallel between his deserts and my own. I did not wish to hate the husband of the woman whom I still unalteringly loved. I would often seek to assure myself that I yet held him in warm regard. But perhaps the mere putting forth of such inward effort was proof that I strove to impose upon myself by a covert falsehood.

All this time I was deeply occupied with my scientific reading and my most detailed and arduous experiments. Visits at the house of Demotte were my sole sources of relaxation. Frequently I would dabble with my chemicals, and test the full forces of my many and complicated instruments, from early morning until far past midnight. And during one such interval of protracted labor that conviction which had for months existed formless and inchoate in my mind assumed startling clearness.

It was nearly one o'clock in the morning. My laboratory was still as death, save for the clicking caused by an electrical current of great strength in a machine invented by myself. I trembled with awe as I drew backward from the gleaming glasses and metals of this machine. It had suddenly taken for me a frightful and majestic individuality. In my nervous and overworked state I would scarcely have been surprised if it had resolved itself into some visible figure, dusky and with a gaze of white fire, like the guardian at a threshold of truth hitherto uncrossed by mortal foot.

I had discovered a totally new electrical law. Of this there could not remain with me, now, the faintest vestige of doubt. Galvani, Volta, Morse, Ampère, Ruhmkorff, and a score of others whom one could name hap-hazard like this—what had they ever dreamed of accomplishing fit to be named beside my own marvellous reach of pure induction? A new property, a wholly unpropheied and unimagined quality of the monstrous and all-permeating power which we call electricity, had revealed itself through me, Douglas Duane. The telegraph, the telephone, the electric light, and all other manifestations of this supreme wonder, were as pitiable commonplaces of science when compared with the masterly breadth and profundity of my message to mankind!

It was true! I had found it at last! I had so often felt that the sword which should cut the Gordian knot of our human existence lay in this wild, alert, unintelligible ardor, than which nature has none other at once more appalling and more mysterious. Every step of my process, every particular of my method, every verification of my novel and peerless announcement, will be found in the purely technical treatise



yet to be written. May I only live to complete that treatise, since without it I well know that a thousand sceptics will rise up against the testimony here offered! Roughly told, so that they who understand little of science may obtain something like a moderate apprehension of what I had achieved, the results of my long and severe toil may be thus presented:

*I had discovered that massed charges of electricity can be transmitted from the molecules of one body to those of another, after the latter body has been deprived of all electrical receptivity save to a single special kind of charge, induced and concentrated by myself.*

Alas! how like a rushlight shows any attempt at elucidation when science is deprived of her own terse, exact tongue and must speak in one as alien as mere rhetorical generalizing! Would Caselli have found it easy to explain his renowned pantelegraph among those who were ignorant of how the mighty laws whence he had derived it are mentioned and discussed? And yet did not even many of his fellow-savants assail him for years with the most discouraging scoffs? It is sometimes harder to teach those who already know than those quite unlettered. Still, my coming document cannot fail in clarity for those whose former training permits them to understand its professional treatment and its authentic drift.

One more step, as I told myself there in the still dead of night, remained to be taken. My theory, vast as it was, had been established. It was now fact. During my final experiments that very night, I had reduced a broad-leaved, sturdy-stemmed plant to a sudden condition of collapse, of thorough vegetable death. A few minutes later, within the large oval glass repository where I had insulated it, I had seen, after instantaneous application of the new electricity which I had learned how to set free from a combination of certain chemicals, the plant almost leap again into its original health and thrift. But this was not all. The extraordinary charge had been thus unbound from one captivity to enter another; it had penetrated and permeated the tissue of the effete, lifeless plant, being wrung by a single intense decomposing convulsion from its former stronghold. Now remained the next height of discovery, more easy for me to scale, perhaps, than I had hitherto dreamed. . . . But here rapid misgiving darted through my mind. Had I really conferred on this plant a vitalization as intimately mordant and molecular as I had supposed it to be dowered with? Hale as it looked now in its glass receptacle, how would it stand ordinary atmospheric contact and pressure? . . . Acting on this thought, I at once released it. In less than twenty seconds it began to droop, until presently I saw past a doubt, by its re-established languor, that the hardiness bestowed upon it, though genuine enough amid the surroundings I had first imposed, had now shown itself a most evanescent stimulus.

Still, the grasp upon its atomic organism had been for a time firmly effective. Something which the idealists would surely have called an inspiration must at this point have seized me. My chamber contained two or three other plants, of about equal size with that which I had just used. I went to one of these, a handsome, thrifty *Agapanthus umbellatus*, and unearthed it from its pot. I replaced the dead growth

(which, by the way, had been a really superb specimen of *Hydrangea quercifolia*) in the glass receptacle. Then I brought about in my apparatus the necessary dynamic exertion. Suddenly, while its effort was at full work, I plunged the fresh, living plant within that peculiar chemical solution whence I had been able to obtain my first astonishing semi-galvanic results.

No further success crowned this last venture. Or at least I so decided immediately after I had removed the hydrangea from the insulating glass. The savage and seething liquid had swiftly consumed all traces of the agapanthus, as a scrap of delicate paper is consumed in a glowing coal-grate. . . . But the other plant! It had been vivified as before, and now, on meeting the air of the room, it began, as before, to wilt. *But life did not wholly leave it.* Twice it had been dead—once through my own deliberate killing of it through the paralysis of its germs by means of the new force I had mastered, and once through its exposure to the common oxygen. But now, again exposed, it retained a kind of drowsy, consumptive animation, impossible to discredit. I let ten, fifteen, twenty minutes pass, eagerly watching its foliage. No; *it still lived*, though in a sickly, spiritless way.

I at length fell to pacing the floor of the laboratory, in the deepest and most exasperating perplexity. Had the vital principle of the destroyed plant sped with its own material dissolution into the fibrous texture of that which yet survived? By the simple act of plunging the agapanthus into what so mercilessly disintegrated it, had I not fraught my electrical charge with an entirely unanticipated pungency? And yet the transmission had only been partial. The hydrangea still hung dejectedly its stately head. How aggravating, how maddening, was this rebuff at the very threshold of victory! I had given the plant fresh life, and that truth alone was sufficient to make me a prince among discoverers. But it was not enough; it was not what I had aspired for; it was achievement frosted by failure. Some other man would come after me who would build a structure of fame on my foundations, who would use me for a guide-post to immortality. He would rear a palace, as it were, from the very stone I had quarried and hewn!

Agitated by reflections like these, I chanced to let my gaze fall on the other plants, ranged in their verdant symmetry near one of the windows. And then, like a flash, I became conscious of a possible reason for my late seeming defeat. A second hydrangea, almost exactly resembling the one I had subjected to so harsh a course of treatment, gleamed graceful among its companions. Once more I put the blighted plant within glass confines, made good the connections of the machine, and then dropped into its bath of destruction the beautiful plumes of leafage which invested the flourishing and intact growth. . . . A shrill hiss followed, as the fierce fluid devoured this fair gift dipped into its baleful tank. . . . And now, again, I turned toward its less perfect sister, plainly seen behind the glass. For a third time it had regained its native health and beauty. I withdrew it from the glass, and for a third time waited what would happen. Nothing at all happened. The plant preserved one aspect of unchanging revivification. It had re-

ceived the vital essence of something which was of its own vegetable species. It had received the same vital essence from another plant not of its own species, but had for this reason been unable to retain the projected vitalization. The molecular receptivity which I had prepared in it had shown me a new vague law of repulsion, and one touching upon that protection of species in animals concerning which Darwin has had so much irrefutably to assert.

Well, I asked myself, with a great swelling at the heart, after all was over, what had I actually done?

The answer came to me, distinct and direct. I had, in the first place, found a totally new way of dealing with electricity, and had caught from the mysteries lying beyond all science a new electrical agent whose birth was due to my own genius of discovery.

This last sentence may seem to flavor of egotism. Let it do so. My genius is to myself a mental admission which no dissentient criticism may affect. The treatise, yet unwritten, will make everything clear as day; and the writing of this treatise will depend solely on my physical capacity to undertake it. If by any chance I should fail to perform that additional work after I have completed this, then the very science on which I base every assertion here advanced may possibly be avowed fabulous. . . But I shall not fail. I shall make my confessions flawlessly credible.

The night, as I have said, reigned mute around me when this last great conviction of conquest pressed into my mind. An awe had now filled and swayed me. I stood alone with a phantom, as one might say, summoned from un conjectured deeps.

The very intensity of the silence bore upon me. I thought of the woman I loved, pierced though I was with other keenly opposite sensations. I could not escape such remembrance. I might hate it, but it was still sure assertively to push itself into my consciousness. . . And yet I abruptly asked myself, while I sat there, fatigued and excited in my unquestionable triumph, why should Millicent's face thus intrude upon me? What had Millicent to do with the grand discovery I had made? She could never share its glory. She was Demotte's wife, not mine. She—

A horrible shudder passed through me at this instant. I rose and tottered weakly toward the still, cold, mechanical evidence of that marvellous law which I, Douglas Duane, had so strangely excavated from the glooms of the unknowable.

Was there a God? I had not proved that there was *not*, with all my atheistic proclivities. Was there a soul—a human soul? I had neither proved nor disproved a human soul. But I had proved, beyond the last imaginable protest of the materialist, that in lower orders of life vitality was transmissible from one vegetable form to another.

"I will stop there!" I cried aloud amid the stillness. I was still thinking of Millicent. It seemed to me then that I dared not go further. If I had shot the life of one plant into the body of another, why should I not be able to shoot *the soul* of a fellow-creature into—?

I staggered toward the window, still thinking of Millicent, of my love for her, of my unmeasured desire to possess her as my own. . . I

faintly recall that I tried to lift the sash of the window and failed. My brain whirled frightfully. I recollected, amid my fading mentality, that I had dared to dream of putting my own soul into Floyd Demotte's body. . . .

The dawn was streaming into the laboratory when I became thoroughly awake and at the same time aware of what had occurred. I must have lain semi-unconscious for a long time. I now rose feebly from the floor. I felt very weak. I was still thinking of Millicent. It seemed as if I had been thinking of her through all this term of lethargy. And yet certain strange words were on my lips, as if I had been repeating them amid a dream.

"Save me from *that*," I was murmuring. "Whatever happens, let me not dare to dream of *that*!"

### VIII.

When I again met Demotte and Millicent, each was far from suspecting the agony through which I had passed. On this occasion I dined with them in the Second Avenue house. That evening Demotte was called away from home—if I mistake not, to meet both for welcome and farewell some old college-friends who were on their way to Europe from the West. As he bade me good-night and begged that I would excuse him for just this once, I could clearly detect in his face the disinclination which he felt to leave me at all. But he felt no shadow of disinclination to leave me alone with his wife. "Millicent is to be more fortunate than myself, to-night," he said, glancing toward her with my hand still clasped in his own. "She is to enjoy your unshared society. . . Pray don't go too soon, Douglas. Millicent likes above all things to talk with you."

These words, meant in the most careless geniality, stabbed me. Millicent, on her own side, answered them by an amiable little smile and nod: she was evidently not in the least embarrassed. 'O blended mockery and absurdity!' I thought. Here was Floyd Demotte, whose ridiculous jealousy of his wife had almost turned him into her jailer, showing this entire willingness that I—I, the man who measurelessly loved her!—should pass three or four hours in her company while he himself was absent!

"I have some new music," said Millicent, as soon as her husband had gone. She went to the piano and began tossing about some of the loose sheets of music that lay there. She was not an accomplished artist, perhaps, but her father had known what good instruction meant, and had procured it for her. Apart from this, there was a tender poetic spontaneity in her playing which had won me; it was like her own sweet womanliness put into audible harmonies. "I know that my strumming never bores you," she went on, lightly, while she sought one of the compositions to which she had referred. "You once told me so, although you may have forgotten the careless compliment."

"I haven't forgotten telling you so," I answered, speaking with that affectation of gayety which I had found the most capable concealment, when near her, for grave and dangerous disclosures. "But I didn't

use the word 'strumming;' that's a coinage from the mint of your own modesty."

She half turned toward me, smiling. She had found the sheet she wanted, and had drawn it from the others; a soft lamp struck her profile, showing the pearly curve of one cheek, and bringing into winsome relief the tiny salience of one dark, upward eyelash. "Shall I play this, then?" she asked.

"By all means play it."

She seated herself at the piano immediately, as if with a childish pleasure in my sanction. "It is so new and yet so touching!" she exclaimed, while she opened the pages and spread them out on the rack before her. "There's a gleam of Chopin in it, now and then, and of Schubert, too . . . you'll see what I mean, I'm sure." Then she peered at the initial leaf, and shook her head with humorous despair. "I can't pronounce the composer's name. It's made of a very Russian-looking mob of consonants. But there's nothing harsh in this lovely *pensée fugitive*, as he calls it. . . I know you'll agree with me."

She at once commenced to play, and with a taste and elegance for which all her previous performance had ill prepared me. The melody was fine and forcible in its grasp and finish; if I am not wrong, the composer of it has since won a secure fame. But, after some really brilliant execution, Millicent surprised me by a most delicate suavity and dreaminess of treatment. The theme had become one of longing and of cogent yet subdued fervor. She gave every sign of being equal to the remarkable meaning which the notes now conveyed. I had not imagined that she could play so well. The work had clearly taken hold of her as none other which I had heard her strive to express. I rose in a real enthusiasm as she approached what I knew to be the end of the whole delicious little idea. As she was striking the last minor chords I approached her, full of the warm praise which she had roused in me.

But suddenly her fingers wrought a clash of discords on the keys. She turned her face toward mine, very rapidly, and then withdrew it from my sight. But in that brief glimpse I had seen that she was unwontedly pale and that tears were streaming from her eyes. Instantly I hurried toward her.

"What is it?" I exclaimed. "Are you unwell? What does this mean?"

"Nothing—nothing!" she faltered. The next minute she had risen and had hurried away from me. I thought she was about to quit the room, but instead of doing so she sank into one of the chairs yards away from where I was now standing. . . A little later I heard from her a sound of weeping, and saw that she was pressing a handkerchief to her face with the plain suggestion of hard struggle against a rush of almost unconquerable emotion.

My heart began to beat; I felt myself growing dizzy; the control which I knew it would be madness for me to lose threatened desertion. Loving this woman as I did, it was unmanning pain for me to see her suffer and yet offer her no tribute of sympathy. . . But sympathy, with me, might foretoken a passionate disarray, an abandonment of prudence, which I would hereafter regret unspeakably.



What should I do? My blood was tingling in my veins. I saw that to remain where I was would be impossible. Should I fly from the room by a door close at hand, thus gaining the outer hall, and thence leaving the house? . . .

But very soon a great change took place in Millicent. She had mastered her agitation. She rose from the chair and slowly approached me. She was still pale, but her tears had ceased to flow.

"You must think me wretchedly foolish," she said, as she came up to my side again.

"You surprised me a little; that was all," I replied. "Was it the music? Yes; what else could it have been?"

"It was the music—and what it seemed to desire."

"And that made you think of yourself?"

"Yes. It expressed just my own . . . dissatisfaction. I suppose that is the right word. I don't mean unhappiness. I'm not unhappy. Why should I be? Floyd is the very soul of devotion and kindness. And yet . . ." She paused, and gave a heavy sigh, sweeping my face wistfully with her luminous blue eyes.

"You are discontented, then?" I said. "Only that. And you know why. . . Am I wrong, here, in asserting that you really do know why?"

She shook her head. "No. I can't help knowing why. It is being kept forever from seeing people, as he keeps me! It is feeling that I'm almost like one of those Eastern women, except that my seraglio doesn't overlook palms and lemon-groves; it commands a prospect of Second Avenue."

"Now that you have chosen to speak of this matter," I said, "you make it possible for me in turn to talk upon it."

"You have noticed, then!" she exclaimed, with a kind of eager sadness.

"Good heavens, Mrs. Demotte! I am not blind!"

She laid one hand on my arm. "Why do you call me by that tiresomely ceremonious name?" she asked. "I've told you I did not like it from the lips of a friend such as you are to both of us, and Floyd has told you *he* would much prefer you to call me Millicent."

"Well, . . . Millicent," I said.

"Thanks. . . And so you *have* noticed how he behaves? Of course you must. Do you know, it seems to me like a disease with him, this perpetual dread of my giving a word or a smile to any one besides himself? If he were not so mild-natured I should grow frightened about it all; I should feel like one of Bluebeard's wives—the last one, I mean, that he hadn't yet murdered. . . Ah, it's horrid, is it not, for me to say anything so hard of poor, fond Floyd, even in jest? You must have seen, too, how I've appeared to bear it all quite uncomplainingly."

"I have seen that—and with astonishment."

"Why 'with astonishment'?" she questioned, drawing back from me a little, and giving her tones an almost hurt inflection. "Is not Floyd my dear, chosen husband? Ought I to complain if it were dealing him distress for me to complain?"

"Yes," I returned, "you ought. That is my frank answer to a direct question. Submission with every worthy wife should have its limits in self-respect. Floyd truly insults you by the life he forces you to live."

She gave a little dismayed cry. "How can it be insult if it only comes from his love?"

I smiled bitterly. "Love can be as harsh a tyrant as ever hate was."

She clasped her hands together, and held them thus; the troubled, restless movement of her eyes bespoke some earnest self-inquiry of perhaps a new sort. Then at length she gave a little start, and looked at me very searchingly indeed.

"Tell me, Douglas—do you think I should take some definite step? Do you think I should make it clear to Floyd that he is not using me fairly as his wife?"

"I think so," was my answer. "Either you will lay up for both your husband and yourself an after-life of great unhappiness, or you will now, with promptness and decision, claim your natural and proper rights. I need not define to you what I believe these are. You have shown me that you perfectly understand them. Still, if you wish to use my own disapproval of his course in supporting and defending your protest, I fully grant you the liberty to do so."

"No, no," she said swiftly, and with some excitement in her vetoing sentences. "I would not for the world have him even fancy that you had thus advised me. Whatever effort I may make had far better seem to him born entirely of my regret and sorrow at this unfortunate defect I find in him—as indeed it should be and will be." Her look glittered tearfully again for a second or two, as it met mine; but she drove back the impulse to reveal further weakness in my presence, though her lips had a tremor, now, that I could not misconstrue. "No, no, Douglas. He is so fond of you. I should be sorry enough if he ever broke with you. You are all that binds him to his fellow-men. I don't know of any one else whom he cares for, whom he even does more than tolerate, except yourself."

"I think I know of one," I said, with dryness in which I was sure she would detect nothing but a grim drollery; and she did detect nothing else.

"Ah, you mean me!" she cried softly. "Of course—yes. But I am too much to him. That is what I want to change. I don't imply that I would have him care for me any less than he does now . . ."

"You would be miserable if he did?"

She smiled in a sweet, arch, defiant way that was a declaration of her unshaken loyalty. "You understand that I would!" she said. "You have seen us so often together."

"Oh, yes, I don't doubt it."

She kept silent, drooping her eyes; then suddenly she lifted them to mine. "If I could only prevail upon you to do a certain thing!" she murmured.

"Prevail upon me?" I repeated. "To do what?"

"To come and live with us!" She gave a little nervous laugh and

leaned toward me. "Oh, it would be so pleasant! Floyd wants it; I am certain that he wants it more than you dream. The house is small, but then we could amply accommodate you here. You should have the whole third-story for all those mysterious scientific performances which you go through. And I am sure—or at least I am *nearly* sure, Douglas—that the effect of your presence here would be beneficial to Floyd as regards this odd, fanciful prejudice that has taken hold of him. And I should be so glad if you would come! . . . Now will you promise me to think it over before you refuse?" She stretched out one hand toward me, and there was a half-playful supplication in her look.

At that moment it seemed to me as if I both loved and hated her. I cannot recall just how I received this most unforeseen proposition. For some little time, as I well recall, I could not divest myself of the idea that she was using me with a calculated, premeditated cruelty. . . . And yet in my soul I knew this was the worst of egotistic delusions. It has been asserted more than once that no man was ever yet in love with a woman unless the woman somehow knew it. But Millicent Demotte never vaguely dreamed it of me. She had been reared in too complete an isolation from those girlish experiences which are the formative customs and usages of her sex. Her vanity was an unstirred deep, if it ever really existed. In all women I believe that it is merely the incident of an imposed education, acting upon their feminine reciprocity of temperament. Women are by nature no vainer than men; our faulty modes of education alone make them so.

The piano was close at my side, with its disordered heap of music-sheets. I turned toward these and moved them to and fro just as Millicent herself had done a short while previously. Through my pained heart rushed the realization of how cold she must be pronouncing me. But I could not answer her just yet; I had a strong secret agitation to get well within bonds before I did so. . . . And presently I said, knowing all this time that she had been watching intently my averted face,—

"You ask that I shall think your proposition over before I refuse it. But you don't refer to your own kindness in making it."

"Ah!" I heard her but did not see her exclaim. "You will accept it, then?"

"I—I will think it over," I answered, trying not stupidly to stammer the words.

"I see—you refuse."

I turned toward her. I had now gained mastery over myself, but I was by no means certain how long it might last.

"All that I can tell you just at this time," I said, "is that—I will think it over. There are reasons—practical reasons—why I should do so."

She looked at me with her beautiful eyes widely opened. "In what a solemn voice you say that! . . . You're not going?"

I had taken her hand, shaken it, and then moved away toward the nearest door. "Yes—I must go. I have some business-letters that I can't delay till to-morrow. . . . Shall you adopt that new plan with Floyd? . . . you know to what I allude."

"Yes," she said.

When I had got out into the street, a few minutes later, I questioned myself as to whether I had shown any piteous awkwardness in my exit from the drawing-room. No, I soon concluded. My nerve had befriended me; I had somehow managed to play no fool's part. I had made it appear as if those "business-letters" were truly substantial claimants upon the rest of my evening.

"Live in that house!" I thought, as I walked along through the lamplit quietude of Second Avenue. "What *might* happen, now, if I were mad enough to really go and live there?"

## IX.

Two days afterward Demotte called upon me in my laboratory. The moment I looked into his face I discovered that he was perturbed, discomposed. "Are you very hard at work?" he asked, seating himself near a window and absently moving the slant shadow of his cane here and there on the sun-flooded carpet.

"No," I said, letting my gaze wander among the various paraphernalia that filled the apartment. "I am getting to be a confirmed idler, I fear."

"An idler? You?"

"Yes. My work has come to a kind of stand-still, somehow." I thought, while I gave this reply, to what depths of meaning it pointed.

"You're on the verge of some *magnum opus*, I suppose, and pause accordingly."

I tried to laugh in an unforced way. "That's a most charitable definition, Floyd, of my laziness."

"You don't know what laziness means, my dear fellow, any more than I know what industry means. . . It might have proved of infinite benefit to me if I'd been born a poor man. I sometimes think that book-collecting hobby of mine has been ridden quite far enough. In any case, the mania is a good deal less violent than formerly. Perhaps if I'd had some true occupation, Douglas, I'd . . . I'd possess a healthier mind than at this moment."

"And you think your mind an unhealthy one now?"

I saw precisely the drift of his conversation, but I preferred that he should not perceive this was the case. His tone of self-pity astonished me; I was unprepared to hear him approach the subject of his relations with Millicent; but provided he did so at all, self-defence looked his one calculable and prospective method. Could he possibly mean to denounce his own conduct as blamable?

Such was his intent, as he soon made clear. "How can a mind be anything except unhealthy that turns, as mine does, blessings into torments? Millicent is the loveliest creature in all the world; I should take the keenest delight and pride whenever she won the admiration of others." He made a gesture of the most pitiable exasperation. "But I can't find anything except a dull, gnawing misery in her sanest, purest diversions. It must be a kind of insanity with me; I suppose it is. You know all about it by this time. . . Good God! I don't

imagine people haven't seen it and talked of it by scores—I'm not such a poor head-hiding ostrich as that. . . And now, at last, *she* has begun to complain. It's no feeble remonstrance, either. She doesn't merely deplore affairs as they exist; she demands a sweeping change in them. It seems queer that she should, after her long and remarkable patience with me."

He lapsed into silence, and I straightway took the opportunity of saying, "She has certainly shown great patience with you."

"That's your real belief, is it?" he questioned, with emphatic anxiety, where contrition also appeared operative.

"It's not merely my belief," I returned; "it's my firm conviction."

He started up from his chair, went to the window in whose sunny flood he had been sitting, and soon turned from it with his face full of both sombreness and resolve.

"I'll conquer my folly!" he cried. "I'll yield to Millicent in everything. She shall go everywhere; she shall know everybody. By Jove, Douglas, if the men make love to her I shan't mind—or I shall force myself not to mind!"

"Draw the line there," I said, smiling—though I felt almost as little like smiling as I had ever felt in my life. . . .

The next few weeks corroborated unmistakably this new resolution. The Second Avenue house was thrown open to guests with a successful abruptness which bespoke wonders for the dormant potency of Demotte's name and position. There is a strong flavor of nonsense in such a fact, when recorded of a republican city like New York. If some European nobleman had thrown open his doors to the merry patrician *monde* after a prolonged retirement or absence, their acquiescence in his desire to meet them once more would have suggested no element of strangeness. But here was Floyd Demotte, in the chief city of a country whose very roots of being were supposed to strike far down within the fresh, untainted soil of democracy, and yet who found himself easily able, after neglecting it for years, to assert a handsome patent of grandeeship, the reverse of all conceivable principles on which our American commonwealth was founded.

But let the shafts of satire, that almost any hand may sharpen, rest, so far as concerns my own sense of this national self-contradiction, quietly unshaped. The truth remains that Floyd Demotte bared his threshold, and that many amiable, modish and well-bred people thronged across it into the rather limited drawing-rooms which lay beyond. The season suited such a dispensation of hospitality. Three or four afternoon teas blended themselves very appositely with the festivities reigning elsewhere in town. Then, too, there was a marked curiosity to see the woman whom Floyd Demotte had married. Of course the accredited umpires of society sent cards in return for those of Mr. and Mrs. Demotte. There could certainly not be the least danger in their doing so—as they unanimously argued. She may have been a Miss Heaven-knows-whom, but she was now Floyd Demotte's wife, and was not he bound by complicated ties of blood to the noblest families of Knickerbockedom? Assuredly he had been a bear of seclusion



and reserve heretofore, but now that he chose to emerge, now that he had consented no longer to *faire la police* over his wife in that farcical fashion, it could do no harm mercifully to pardon his past stupidity.

As for Millicent, she deported herself, through all this time, with a childlike ecstasy as *naïf* as it was delightfully becoming. She wore the new robes that deft milliners wrought for her with a grace the weariest cynic could not deny her. The neat-cut, costly satins and velvets which now ensheathed her supple form and resolved their elegance and sumptuousness into folds which some intuitive tact taught her how to irreproachably dispose, borrowed a new beauty from her own instead of augmenting it. She became a popular personage at once, because of her sincere gladness to move amid the light and color of gay assemblages and the entire sincerity of enjoyment which made her personal loveliness universally attract. Demotte went with her everywhere, bored to the soul, hating the new life he had forced himself to accept, but cultivating a tolerance of the whole ordeal for which I knew that severe remorseful pangs were responsible.

And I—how did I know this? For the simple reason that I followed Millicent and her husband into the thick of their recent exploit. It was no more difficult for me to do so than the mere leaving of pasteboard at certain houses; for I was that absurd personage, an American gentleman with an inherited right to hold himself at pleasure an active nabob or a capricious recluse. Millicent and I met each other constantly at entertainments, nowadays. She was always infallibly cordial to me, no matter how many devotees surrounded her. She would sometimes laughingly tell me that I was quite as much thought of as she, and that I helped to swell her power through my faithful adherence. But in my heart I knew this either a grievous mistake or else a mere friendly compliment born of that ever undisguised liking which had so often raised itself before me as the mockery of my changeless passion.

It had been a gay season, but it waned at last, toward Lent, and I was certain that Demotte drew a vast sigh of relief as it did so. One evening, after Lent had set in, I presented myself at the Second Avenue house, prepared to accompany himself and Millicent to the opera. I was a little late; my own brougham had driven to the door and had met Demotte's carriage, waiting there. I was prepared, on entering, to find Millicent in a humorously scolding mood, and Demotte, as usual nowadays, neutrally quiescent. But I had scarcely passed into the drawing-room before it became apparent to me that some serious disturbance had taken place between husband and wife. Millicent rose from a sofa to greet me, her fallen opera-cloak blending with her festal draperies. Demotte stood not far off, leaning against the mantel.

"We are not going to the opera," Millicent said, as she gave me her hand.

"Not going?" I echoed. The "why?" that I was about to add died on my lips; I had seen Demotte's clouded face. But it was he who next spoke.

"Millicent considers me a tremendous tyrant," he said grimly. "That, I believe, is why she has decided on not going."

"Have I called you any such name?" she asked, turning and looking at him with a full, calm, arraigning directness.

Demotte shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, no—not in words. But you have meant it; you have meant it beyond the shadow of a doubt."

"What tells you that?" she exclaimed, with a little despairing gesture, as she turned to me.

"My conscience," he said.

She sank on the sofa again.

"I thought Floyd's tyranny," I ventured, "was quite a thing of the past, if you will pardon my having an opinion at all on a subject which does not concern me." These words were addressed to Millicent, though I made them loud enough easily to be overheard by her husband.

"It *does* concern you!" Millicent cried, with a sort of good-natured irritability. "Why should it not? It's your fault, Douglas, if the subject has no interest for you."

"Yes," struck in Demotte, coming a little in my direction and watching me with an intent scrutiny. "Millicent is right. It's your fault."

I looked from one to the other of them with wonder. I let myself say the first thing that rose to my lips—perhaps because this very wonder compelled me. "So, then," I faltered, "there is no real quarrel?"

"Quarrel?" exclaimed Millicent. She instantly rose, went over to Demotte, and threw both arms about him, kissing him on the forehead. "How *could* there be a quarrel between Floyd and me?" she continued, while crossing the room again to within a short distance of where I stood. "Don't you know us better than that? Surely, Douglas Duane, you ought to know us better. We have simply found out to-night just how much we love each other—nothing else!"

"Ah!" I said, with a gravity that was no doubt as colorless as I sought to make it.

Demotte laughed uneasily. "It's this," he said, "this and this only: I happened to give my wife a kiss when I saw how pretty she looked in that pink silk, and to tell her that we somehow used to be better friends in the old days than we are now. I may have said it with a touch of rather testy sarcasm; I——"

"He did nothing of the sort!" asseverated Millicent, lifting one hand repellingly toward him as if to wave away the credibility of his announcement. "He said it with a voice as kind and sweet as any that he ever used. But something in his voice pierced me with—contrition. Yes, that's just the word for it—contrition!" Here her voice broke, and she caught her breath, as if in the effort to make thorough tranquillity the dignified key-note of her discourse.

"Millicent!" her husband now struck in, reproachfully and admonishingly.

She wheeled herself toward him for a moment, and then turned again to me. "Don't mind what he says," she swiftly proceeded. "He has been martyring himself all this time. I have seen it and known it—and I have behaved like . . . well, like a selfish creature!"

"You?" I murmured. It seemed to me that with her flushed face and her richly gleaming eyes, with the thread of diamonds about her

slender throat and the two or three tiny white feathers jutting from her high, banded coronal of tawny hair, I had never yet seen her so beautiful as now. Her loveliness thrilled me with a new enchantment. "You?" I repeated.

"Yes, I," she hurried. "Douglas, you are so wise, so calm, so reasonable; you're a mathematician, a great thinker, a man who will some day do something marvellous in science, even if you haven't really done it already. You must see perfectly just how ungenerous I have been. I don't want to go about in fineries and have idle flatteries talked to me, if it is all boring poor Floyd to the very soul. I ought to have stopped it sooner than I have. I ought never to have begun it. I want to end it now, forthwith. That's why we're not going to the opera. That's why we're going to live a much quieter and no doubt more sensible life. I won't see my husband suffer any longer." And now she slipped to my side and caught my hand in both her own, peering into my face with her blue, vividly lucent eyes. "But we've made a kind of compromise together, Floyd and I. We're both so fond of you—you *know* that. We were speaking of you before you came in. We didn't dismiss the carriage for the opera till you came, on that account."

"On what account?" I asked.

"Millicent," broke in Demotte at this point, "don't cling to his hand as you're doing. It won't alter matters. He'll never consent to make himself the victim of our absurd foibles."

"Yes, it will!" cried Mildred. She clasped my hand still tighter with one of her own, and loosened from it the other, raising this to my shoulder and resting it there. "Our compromise, as I choose to call it, Douglas, is that you will come and live with us. We both want you to come—we're both devotedly fond of you. I spoke to you of this before—I've told Floyd that I did. You will be immense company for both of us—you shall be our sole society, our parties, our kettledrums, our opera, our entire outside world. I'll settle down again—I'll become Millicent Hadley once more, the little prim bookworm's-daughter. *Will* you come, Douglas? I—I ask you as a sister." She had put one arm about my neck, now, in a clingingly infantile way that expressed the innocent eagerness of her persuasion as no other action could do. And then her face brightened into a smile whose radiance blent itself with the balm of her breath. But suddenly a laugh of roguish sweetness rippled from her lips, and, with that bird-like activity of movement all her own, she turned her face toward Demotte. "May I kiss him as a sister, Floyd?" she merrily shouted. "Perhaps he will consent to come and live with us then! *May I?*"

Demotte lowered his head, laughing too, and thrust both hands into his trousers' pockets. (*He did so!*—this decorous monster of jealousy, jealous of even women's liking of his wife, yet not jealous of mine!)

"Oh, yes," he said. "Kiss him if he will let you. But it won't make any difference. He'll never come and live with us—he'll stick to his solitude, his acids, his salts, his chemical treatises and his beloved electricity, all the same!"

Millicent laughed again, and kissed me on either cheek, drawing away from me with a second wilder and half-frightened burst of mirth

as she did so. "Now!" she cried, hurrying straight to her husband's side. He put out a hand and drew her to him.

"You foolish Millicent!" he burst forth. And then they both watched me. She was blushing and laughing; he had a smile on his face.

It seemed to me, that smile, a sort of infernal defiance. I knew well enough that it was utterly the opposite, but so it seemed, none the less.

And I laughed, too. "Millicent has conquered," I said. My heart galloped so that it made a humming sound in my ears; I fancied they must hear it if it did not soon stop. "Yes, I'll come. I'll resolve myself into the compromise. . . I'll come and live with you both."

Millicent gave a joyous little shriek of triumph, and kissed her husband many times. . . From that night I never felt as before toward Floyd Demotte. He incessantly presented himself to me as a foe, even a scoffer. He had ceased to be the man I had thus far held him. His very friendship had become a jest, a jeer, a sinister and unpitying taunt.

## X.

I kept my word. I soon had my possessions removed to the Second Avenue dwelling, and shortly afterward I went there myself. Millicent would now and then ask one or two extra guests to dine, but as a rule she maintained her unflinching though self-imposed penance for previous gayety. No persuasion could now move her to resume her former lightness of life. "I suppose it would have been quite different," she said to me, one day, "if Floyd had attempted either rebuke or coercion. But instead of either, he touched my heart with his most lovable resignation. Ah, he has great strength of nature, has Floyd. He knows how to discountenance and even trample upon his own faults!"

She frequently praised him in the most glowing manner, just as now; and it had begun to be bane and gall to me when I observed how placidly she took for granted my complete endorsement of her eulogies. I can only call the months of sojourn with the Demottes which now ensued for me an interval filled with the most feverish discomfitures. I read a great deal, at times, but although my facilities for experiment were excellent I now rarely availed myself of them. Somehow all desire to do so took but a single form, and that, after I had lapsed into reveries and ruminations concerning it, would not seldom leave me bathed in a cold sweat of horrified agitation.

I had now resolved to let myself drift along, henceforth, with the stream of destiny. Against my will I had come into this house—or rather a consent to come had been wrung from me at a time when all emotion was one turmoil. What was to be, must be. My whole future seemed like the slow beckoning of a gigantic shadowy hand. I had broken loose from the just and requisite shackles of continence. . . Had the wages of wrong-doing already set before my spirit the glitter of their lure? But mine, I kept assuring myself, was a position which had never yet known earthly parallel. Perhaps the denizen of some other planet—and I firmly believe there are thousands, even millions,

of populated planets in the universe—had been confronted with just such an appalling temptation as my own. But here on earth I must almost certainly stand as the first man who had ever felt this revolting yet overruling desire; one which involved in the first place assassination, and in the second a novelty of audacious crime still undreamed of by all humanity.

It is marvellous that I preserved so much calm amid the turbid reflections that now continually beset me. The more that I read, the more confident I became of the magnificent success which would await that final trial of my theory—a step before which even imagination itself shrank awe-stricken. A hundred minor details of scientific investigation took for me new colors, at this period of larger enlightenment. I reviewed the whole wide field of my previous knowledge, and recognized that I had but partially understood phenomena which now assumed an entirely fresh significance when observed as tributary to the mighty and portentous truth I had unearthed. There were moments in my life, too, when I seemed engirt by the pathos of a terrible loneliness. I had indeed stolen a Promethean fire from the gods themselves. But how agonizing might prove the consequences of this peerless acquirement! The unconquerable strength of my passion was dragging me slowly toward a base misuse of what I had so transcendently secured. It might all have been so different! If I had not loved in this fiercely strenuous way, how great was the benefit which I might have conferred upon my race! He who makes two grass-blades grow in place of one may be a benefactor to his kind; but he who tears a veil from the many which enshroud the last stronghold of infinity itself does more than merely aid the temporal lot of man; he points either toward that priceless cheer of a future immortality for which multitudes long, or toward that absolute future annihilation which may calm untold fanatical dread. He spells out for his groping fellow-creatures the first sentences of an inestimably trustworthy message. He utters to them the first premiss of a supreme syllogism. He either begins for them an immense proof that every evangelist has been bitterly mistaken—that they should live as divinely in Positivism as ever Comte desired them to live—or he confirms through mediums of corroboration unguessed by Saint Augustine the principles and teachings of that clear-souled zealot. And I, with such vital fund of aidful and instructive tidings, how meanly might I fail to utilize its riches! How ignoble to fling it all away on my own selfish yearning!—to make it evil instead of good, disgrace instead of fame, crime instead of honor! . . . Meanwhile, for what had I dared to hope?—in what had I presumptuously fixed an unbounded though darksome trust? . . . And yet I had not fully yielded. Hours were mine when I almost swore to myself that I would never yield. . . . And so the days of my residence with the Demottes multiplied. They were not happy days, or, if they ever resembled happiness, it was of the hectic, dubious, fitful kind.

"You are paler than you were," Millicent said to me one evening, after dinner, fixedly regarding my face for an instant while we quitted the dining-room side by side. Her husband had disappeared, leaving



us alone together, as he frequently did. "And I sometimes think, too," she went on, with a candor as intrepid as if she had been addressing a brother or even a sister, "that you're more given to moods of silence—perhaps also of melancholy—than I've ever before seen you."

"That's not very pleasant to hear," I said. "Still, it shows an interest in me, and for that reason I should find it pleasant."

"How absurd of you!" laughed Millicent. "As if you didn't know just what interest I—that is, Floyd and I—take in you!"

"Oh, pshaw! let Floyd speak for himself."

"And so he would—you know that very well, besides—if you were to ask him."

"But I don't want to ask him," I retorted, with what she possibly took for nothing more harmful than a bit of mock impudence to her spouse and a little flourish of gallantry for herself. "How long ago is it since you first noticed this alleged change in me?"

"Since you first came to live with us," she answered. We had just entered the pretty sitting-room on the ground-floor of the house, with its walls tapestried in plaits of crimson and its furniture of glowing cachemire. The light was turned somewhat low, and the flames that coiled and writhed round a huge black block of coal in the grate, like two fiery snakes playing at hide-and-seek with each other, were on this account more flashingly manifest. Millicent seated herself, and stared into the vivacious and crackling fire, with its lustres in a perpetual evanescent play on her amber hair, and little specks of white or blue splendor leaping from diamond or sapphire on her delicate fingers. I could not help thinking, as I too seated myself not far away from her, how the world of which she had really seen so little had nevertheless robbed her of much simplicity and naturalness.

'She is more *éveillée* nowadays,' I told myself while I watched her. 'She may guess your secret in a trice, unless you are guarded. Perhaps already she has begun to guess it. If you really wish that she should not, greater caution is your policy.'

Aloud I said to her, "May you not, after all, be mistaken about this change in me? May it not be fancy?"

She looked smilingly at me. "No; I'm certain that I don't imagine it. I became certain that I didn't only a day or two ago."

"Ah? So recently?"

"Yes. I meant to ask Floyd——"

"Well, never mind Floyd, for this once."

"You appear oddly indifferent, this evening, to everything that concerns him."

"You concern him, and I'm not indifferent to you. That is, to your reasons for this alteration in myself. Of course you invoked such reasons; you wrought them out of air, if you had nothing more substantial. A woman always does, in these instances."

She laughed. "Perhaps, Douglas, I *had* something more substantial."

I scanned her sweet, firelit profile. "Pray tell me what it was," I urged.

She lifted both her hands for a moment, and then dropped them in

her lap. It was a gesture that "society" had not taught her; I had more than once seen her use it in earlier and less sophisticated hours. "Oh, after all you may be right," she said. "It *was* only a conjecture."

"Well, fact or fable," I persisted, "tell me what it was."

She paused, and the smile on her lips hinted of a fleeting yet introspective mood. Presently she said, with hesitation yet an unmistakable assurance, "I supposed that your going about into the world with Floyd and me might not have left you thoroughly heart-whole."

"Ah," I responded after a little interval, during which the crackle of the fire sounded like so many audible gibes, "you thought I had been possibly falling in love."

"Yes," she said, with that sense of intimacy and receptiveness which nearly every woman can convey by a sudden confidential half-whisper. "Yes—that is what I did think. Is it true? . . . You need not have the least fear, Douglas, of *my* betraying any such secret. No, not even to Floyd."

"Not even to Floyd?" I murmured. But she did not dream how much solemnity of satire underlay the words; it was a satire meant only for myself, somehow; it was like the captive clanking his own chains, just to get a dull, iron note out of them and so make morbidly and doubly sure of his duress.

"No—neither to Floyd nor to any one living." She leaned a little toward me, now, as if waiting, expecting my confirmatory answer.

"I have been in love," I said slowly, "but it was before we went about into the world, as you put it."

"Ah?"

"The woman I cared for never cared for me. It was for a physical cause, I suppose. That sounds blunt, and even coarse. But I don't know any better way of framing it."

She nodded once or twice. "I can understand. . . . She was fond of somebody else."

"No; I don't mean that. I mean simply that I didn't suit her. But she afterward married some one else who did—some one of a more pleasing presence. That is how every one falls in love; don't you think so?"

"Hardly," she objected. She had grown grave, but quickly, brightening a little, she pursued, "Of course looks—the looks that appeal to us—*do* make a great difference. Still, there is the . . . the *soul*! . . . Ah, I remember that you are so materialistic on those questions!"

"You fell in love with Floyd," I said with what sounded to my own ears like an almost cruel abruptness. "You're in love with him still."

She tossed her head in pretty impatience. "Of course you don't present that as a *question*! And of course, if you do, you're too much a friend of both of us not to be certain of the answer beforehand."

"Did you fall in love, then, with Floyd's *soul*?" I asked. "Mind, I use the word just as you use it. Was it the unseen in him that won you, or the seen and tangible and palpable? Come, Millicent,

be honest with me. You always are honest, in hundreds of daily and ordinary ways. But this is a . . . a point that interests me from peculiar motives—materialistic and . . . cold-blooded ones, if you please—motives that relate to my scandalously frigid profession. Now, frankly, if Floyd Demotte could become, we will say, bodily some other man, still retaining what you yourself have termed his soul—still spiritually being Floyd and yet corporally being another than Floyd, how do you think such a . . . a transmigration would affect you?"

She broke into a high, nervous and yet plainly chiding laugh; she pushed her chair away from the fire, and then rose. "Oh, you frighten me, and at the same time you annoy me!" she exclaimed. "Why ask such questions? Why . . .?"

She paused, here, and her face noticeably altered. She hurried toward me; her lips were trembling; her cheeks had paled. "Douglas!" she cried, with a fervor that astonished me. "Are you ill?"

"I?" was my answer. "No. Do I look so?"

The tranquillity of my brief reply must have reassured her. I at once rose after making it. She receded from me, saying,—

"I—I thought you *were* ill. You—you looked so white. You . . ."

A step sounded in the hall outside. The next instant Demotte had entered the room.

"Ah," he cried cheerfully, "you're making yourself comfortable in this cosy place, eh?" He was rubbing his hands together as he approached the fire. "It's unusually chilly for this season. The up-stairs rooms are astonishingly cold. Millicent, we must have the furnace seen to at once." Millicent was looking at me. She gave another laugh, more composed, as she said, "I'm afraid we must have our good Douglas seen to at once."

Demotte was bending over the fire, with outspread hands. "What's Douglas been saying now?" he inquired. "Something in his horribly atheistic vein, or something in his milder one of rank rationalism?"

I made a quick, silencing gesture to Millicent, behind the stooped figure of her husband. It somehow seemed to me as if worse than mortification, worse even than the most poignant embarrassment, would be inflicted upon me by her divulgence of my late words.

She evidently understood and granted my entreaty. But her inclination of the head and her intelligent accompanying smile conveyed to me a pained sadness which I swiftly interpreted.

'She knows it all, now,' I said to myself. 'At last she realizes the truth.'

But . . . was I wrong? Her next quiet words to her husband made me still doubt if I had not too hastily concluded.

"You're half right," she replied to Demotte, turning away from both of us with an airy, careless grace, as if she had spoken jocularly at random. "Oh, you know Douglas by this time, Floyd—what odd things about life, death and the human soul he's always saying."

"Yes," returned Demotte, rather inattentively, warming his hands. . . .

That night, sleepless in my bed up-stairs, I formed and clinched

an unchangeable determination. I would leave New York at once; I would take up my abode in Washington, as I had previously planned. Let them seek to dissuade as they would; no power of dissuasion could shake me. Here lay my last chance.

My last chance of . . what? I buried my head in my tumbled pillow and shuddered amid the darkness. But the response came, nevertheless, pealing through that tortured conscience whose divine origin I had long ago denied, yet whose power, from whatever sources I had chosen to derive it, was infallibly the same:

*"Your last chance of going to your death guiltless of a fiendish and unexampled crime."*

## XI.

When, on the following day, I made known to them my intention, they both stared at me in bewilderment. For some little time I failed to win from them anything except an exchange of astonished looks, as though they were thus mutely inquiring of each other just to what degree I was demented. But at length Demotte quite plaintively exclaimed, "You can't truly be serious, Douglas;" and then I felt that perhaps the ice was at last broken.

I strove to explain to them that I needed change, and that I had long silently entertained this project; but I saw the doubt in their faces while I thus spoke—and especially in the face of Millicent. Had I not told her that I had fallen in love, and that the woman of my choice had married another man? Naturally, she believed that my leaving New York must bear upon this hidden sentiment.

Above all things, during the three days preceding my departure, I wished to avoid any prolonged and significant converse with Millicent. My powers of endurance were not equal to such an ordeal. I was making one last effort to save myself; the weight of my secret burdened me cruelly. I pleaded the hurry of preparation and a resultant siege of engagements as excuses for not appearing at dinner and for breakfasting very early in my own room. Within so short a time it would have been impossible for me to have the many valuable and frangible instruments of my laboratory packed so that their subtle mechanisms, their numberless metallic or glass complications, might escape injuries of transport; and I had therefore placed the duty of properly arranging all these possessions, and of forwarding them after my departure, in the hands of two efficient agents. On this account my departure involved far less trouble than it would otherwise have done. My intervening avoidance of Demotte sprang only from a wish to dispense with harrowing and imperative hypocrisies; my dread lest Millicent should engage me in some discussion of my own future plans came wholly from a fear of myself. I shrank from the desperation, the surrender, the *acharnement* of which I knew my ill-starred passion to be, under pressure, distractedly capable.

But Millicent had doubtless made up her mind in an opposite direction. She meant to talk with me alone before I left the house, and she thus constituted herself an event not to be averted. I had purposely remained out until ten o'clock on the last evening before I

was to start for Washington. I had gone up to my laboratory, which was also appointed as a reading-room in these my days of comparative idleness. I had seated myself at a book-laden table, beside a low lamp, but for surely twenty minutes I had paid no heed whatever to the volume open in my lap. When a knock sounded at my door, as presently happened, I gave a great start; the summons brought me back to actuality from a sequence of such gloomy and thrilling reveries.

I rose and admitted—Millicent. "Are you surprised?" she said, as she crossed my threshold. Her manner was a trifle constrained, and her voice not quite its full, amicable self.

"Surprised?" I repeated, bringing forward a seat, which she at once took. "No, not at all."

She raised one finger and shook it at me, warningly. "Be careful. You know you didn't expect me."

I seated myself rather near her. "Why, there is certainly nothing remarkable in your coming," I said.

"That's just what I think, considering your treatment of us."

I affected not to understand her, at first. "Ah, you mean my not dining here for two or three evenings," I then said, as if newly aware of the idea she had sought to convey. "Well, I must ask your pardon for that; . . . but my time has been so crowded since——"

I hardly paused here, but she broke in with speed and a certain dryness: "Yes. Since you decided to leave us."

"Since I decided to go to Washington."

"Well, it amounts to the same thing. . . . Tell me," she went on, making her tones grave and looking at me intently, "why *do* you go like this?"

"I thought I left it all very clear to you the other morning."

"You left it all very obscure."

"Indeed? Then it must remain obscure, I am afraid."

"Douglas!" she exclaimed. "Floyd and I are your best friends. You have none truer or fonder than we are."

"Have I denied this?"

She watched me mournfully. "Not in language."

"How, then?"

"By your behavior. You have some mystery, and you are making us suffer because of it."

"No, no," I returned, with what she may have taken for irritation, but which was in truth nothing except the keenest mental distress, "there is not any mystery whatever. Floyd has instructed you to come here and advance this objection."

She rose promptly, with more dignity than I had ever seen her show. "That is hardly civil of you," she said.

"Well, I did not intend it to be uncivil," I answered, rising also.

She gave an annoyed movement. "That is a lame enough excuse. . . . However, suppose, if you will, that Floyd has *instructed* me, as you're pleased to phrase it. Suppose we have conspired in this altogether dreadful matter. Is there anything so terrible about our doing so? Are we so greatly to blame for wishing to show interest in a friend whom we have known well and prized highly?"



My brain had begun to whirl; . . the very effect of which I had been darkly confident, provided cause should be supplied for it, had now occurred. "So, then," I said, feeling my heart begin to beat, "Floyd *did* send you here! You don't come of your own direct choice. You come because *he* wished it!"

I saw her turn a shade paler and bite her lip. "I come because we both wished it."

I clinched my hands, then, but no doubt the words I spoke were given with a fair amount of composure. "And you both think there is some mystery about my going? You both want to have that mystery cleared?"

"Yes." We faced each other as she thus replied.

"I will clear it, then, to *you*," I said, and I heard my own voice grow husky and strange to my own ears. "I can't live near you like this, Millicent. I can't, because I love you." There were now a few seconds of silence, during which she stared at me in a childish, dazed way. "Remember what I told you the other evening. You are that woman. . . I love you, and I can't stay here."

She grew deathly pale. She lifted both hands tremulously, and then let them fall. A shiver passed through her, as plain as when we see some abrupt breath of wind strike into the boughs of a slender tree.

"Ah!" she faltered, recoiling from me a little. This was the only syllable that escaped her lips, but the quick, affrighted dilation of her glowing eyes meant more than many sentences.

I sank into a chair, still watching her. For an instant I thought that she would speak, but suddenly, with pride in the poise of her head yet with a great melancholy on her face, she turned and left the room. . .

How she explained it all to her husband I have no conception. But his cordial yet regretful adieu to me the next morning made me certain that she had not told him how the real "mystery" had transpired. . . She bade me good-by with that serenity of whose secret nearly every woman possesses the talisman. (Ah, you women! how often you have been maligned for deceit, yet how often you have known how to deceive in a good cause—with the aim of repelling ruinous disaster!)

That night I reached Washington. But I cannot say that I slept there. It was a night wholly sleepless.

## XII.

I soon found that I had come to the capital in an altogether unfavorable season. The weather, after a few weeks, grew insupportably hot. I decided to spend the threatening summer in travel through the American continent. I visited San Francisco and many other points on the Pacific coast. I fraternized with fellow-travellers; I exulted—or strove to exult—in the topographical novelties and wonders of mountains, cañons, gorges, primeval forests. At the end of it all I assured myself that the trip had done me untold good. I came back

to Washington in early November. No letters had been forwarded to me during my travels; I had ordered that everything in the way of epistolary communication should await me on my return. A letter from Millicent was the first one that I opened. It plunged me into a state of mind that rendered the reading of the other letters for a time impossible.

Nothing could have shown me more thoroughly the lovely disposition of Floyd Demotte's wife than that brief, expressive message. She forgave me everything. She had kept absolute silence regarding my foolish outburst. I myself had most probably meant nothing that I had said. But whether I had or had not meant it, she was always my devoted friend.

She could not have written more fatally unfortunate lines than these, provided she had wished really to appease and comfort me; and I knew well that she had so wished. All the wholesome sanity of purpose and integrity of control that I had gained in my Western wandering seemed to disappear as I read this letter.

She forgave me; she did not scorn me. I was now forever haunted by these two recollections. I resorted once more to my studies, and with receptive faculties quickened by rest. But my researches continually pushed in one direction; I could not restrain their most obstinate tendency; all science held for me, at present, but a single point of keen attractiveness; I need hardly tell my meaning more plainly, just here. With the grim thoughts which Millicent's letter had revived came a kind of fierce counteracting determination to publish my discovery. In this way (for blunt words had best be used when all must so soon glare nakedly) I should perhaps find it easier hereafter to resist the temptation of becoming Floyd Demotte's murderer.

For many days I underwent a stormy struggle. Once let my great law be known, and the deadly fascination of performing a deed which would bring me a tremendous triumph and yet remain forever clothed in unexplainable darkness, would of necessity vanish as well. There, beyond doubt, would lie for me a mighty safeguard. What chiefly lured me now was the serene ease of my opportunity. Never before had there been builded by circumstance so complete an *escalier dérobée* into the very red heart of crime. It was as though some man who alone possessed the secret that there was any poison on earth, should contemplate the destruction of a fellow-creature. But if I laid everything bare before the eyes of mankind—as I hope to do in my yet unwritten treatise—the malign charm of mystery would forthwith dissolve and perish.

I even went so far, in one of my remorseful and morally-stung states, as to fix upon the very hall in which I would deliver a course of lectures. If I had carried out such a purpose, how this country and Europe would speedily have rung with my name! But celebrity had now no imaginable pleasures for me. My unrivalled discovery was of no value as a herald or trumpeter of my having been the first to light upon it. All that it could mean to me henceforward was the attainment or non-attainment of that reward which at times loomed before me as through a mist of blood.

I answered Millicent's letter, but with phrases which it took me hours to compose. The whole reply was a model of politic discretion. More than once, while writing it, I kissed with burning lips the sentences that she had written. I did not affirm that I had spoken senselessly and stupidly to her that evening, or that my words had then far outrun the actual fervor of my feelings. But I left her to suppose this if she were so inclined. I hid under dexterous apology what might have been pages both of repentance and suffering.

This portion of my life, there in Washington, may turn out the dullest kind of narration, and yet to me it teemed with perpetual acuteness of incident. Almost from hour to hour, as surely from day to day, I underwent agonies of revulsion. Should I steep myself in guilt?—should I dash the chance of self-damnation away? Between these two unrelenting appeals of conscience I was incessantly tossed. I had no friends, no acquaintances, in the populous, remarkable city where I had chosen to dwell. I had nothing except my science, my laboratory, my books, and the implacable temptation which assailed me equally from each!

I dared not make the same experiment with two animal bodies that I had already made with the two plants. It would have been easy enough for me to do so. The lower orders of animal life offered clear facilities for a new test. But the conditions of my own wretched uncertainty as to what course I would ultimately pursue rendered such an act impious in my sight as the reckless indulgence of my already mutinous longings. Besides, the whole truth seemed now pitilessly plain to me. One immense vital force, entering every form of matter, from the meanest insect to the most lordly human mind, constituted what we call life in the first and soul in the last. The material part of the insect, infused by this principle as a sponge is infused by water, makes it crawl, and forage for its food, and be the effete, inferior thing we find it. The material part of the man, similarly penetrated and endowed, gives to his brain, his blood, his nerves and his sinews the potency that raises him so much higher in the largely inclusive scale of creation. This, I asserted, was all, and was the all-in-all. I had fathomed the law which governs organic life to its final roots. I needed no further proof than that which I had so amply gained. 'Without the slightest fear of absolute extinction,' I told myself again and again, 'I would submit my own body to the same test that I employed on one of those plants, provided the corpse of Floyd Demotte, made previously receptive through those molecular changes which I alone know how to bring about, represented the other plant.' And I had thus ruminated without a vestige of self-deception. No shadow of personal fear could possibly affect me in the carrying out of such a design. One deterring influence was at work, and one alone.

Strangely enough, as it now occurred, Floyd Demotte himself smote this restraint a shattering and destructive blow.

I had passed a wretched night. In the early part of it I had walked rather aimlessly about among the streets of Washington. Chancing to pause before a certain bright-lit building, I had read on huge placards posted at its entrance that there would be a lecture, this particular

evening, by the world-famous religious orator, the Rev. Mr. Terebinth. I had heard of Mr. Terebinth, the religious orator, as he chose to call himself. I had learned that he delighted to declare an unbounded enmity for science. Some of the newspapers had said that he was clever. I had once read a report of one of his lectures, and did not understand it. I was not irritated by it, for this simple reason—I did not understand it. I remember fancying that the short-hand writers who took it down had possibly mutilated its true sense. At least, I gave Mr. Terebinth the benefit of the doubt here. But now it occurred to me that I might ascertain whether I had been merciful or merely just. It might prove a curious experience, too, this being brought in direct contact with one of the foes of science. I had heard that such a form of dementia existed, but I had never quite been able to credit the statement. Hating science affected me as a process no less extraordinary than hating the bread one ate or the air one breathed. Science is knowledge—purely that, and nothing else. All the good that has ever come to mankind has come through knowledge. If it has received the least good from another source, I have yet to learn its name and quality.

The large hall was filled with people; I could not obtain any seat whatever at so late an hour. The ticket-seller, as he told me this, betrayed an inflection of surprise; he evidently thought it odd that I should not be aware of Mr. Terebinth's amazing popularity, and that I should rashly expect a seat by nearly nine o'clock, within this the stronghold of his burning eloquence.

I soon concluded, however, that I had no reason to regret being among those who stood. Ten minutes of this ordeal would easily put a limit to my endurance. Mr. Terebinth was a wiry, spare little man, buttoned up to his pale, sharp chin (or perhaps a trifle beyond it) in black broadcloth. He darted from one end of his platform to another with his long hair flying behind him, and pounded the palm of his left hand with the clinched fist of his right. Every now and then he apparently strove to be calm. But he never succeeded in becoming calm. He was always striving, as it looked, and not succeeding. I could no longer foster any doubt as to his hatred of science. It found sinewy expression in such able periods as these:

"The domain of scientific inquiry, my friends, may be wide. Its possessors assert that it is. I don't deny that they're right. But evolution has to cower like a whipped hound before that marvellous secret which was unfolded to John in Patmos. *They* say John never saw anything at all in Patmos. Perhaps they would like to tell us that John was drunk." (Laughter, suppressed by an amazed frown, though not without a certain dim, pleased curl at the corners of our Demosthenes's lips.) "Oh, they're quite capable of such blasphemy as that, my friends, these priests of the new faith. . . And now let us quietly and carefully examine just what science is trying to do in the way of ruining the *old* faith, the secure, immutable and glorious creed founded eighteen hundred sacred years ago. It is deliberately putting Matter in the place of God. 'Bow down and worship Matter,' it cries, 'for you'll never get anything else, though you plod and delve for untold decades.'

That's what Darwin says, and Huxley says, and Tyndall says, and what the whole fine little race of new, self-sufficient, thumbs-in-their-vest-arm-holes crowd all say!" Here the Rev. Mr. Terebinth magically unbuttoned his funeral broadcloth, and strutted about his platform with either thumb in either arm-hole of his newly-disclosed waistcoat. And as he did so there was a wild laugh. And then he made a joke on protoplasm, quickly followed by one on the 'Darwinian monkey,' and as quickly followed by a passionately pietistic outburst regarding the glory of God.

I felt myself turning sick. I asked myself, as I slipped out of the dense-thronged hall, whether these auditors, who so enjoyed such blatant comminglement of falsehood and platitude, were themselves truly aware of their own folly in listening to easy, non-committal slanders against science. 'No,' I soon inferred; 'they gather there to be amused by an extravagant fanatic, who dishes up for them his frivolities of epigram with spices of a novel bigotry.'

And then, as I walked homeward, the thought of what science really was, and of all that it might, in its firm, tranquil, irreversible way, do for humanity hereafter, enthralled me. 'Suppose,' I mused, 'that some one told the world, as I could tell it to-night, of how a monstrous Nothing lay beyond every aim, effort or desire. Would not a clear gain result from these tidings to the multitudes they addressed? Hope might die in countless hearts, but would not a great moral desire to make this life better and sweeter than it now is be born of such a mighty convulsive change? Would not men and women live for each other far more philanthropically and unselfishly than they now live? If this earth were for them the be-all and the end-all, would they not turn emotions wasted upon aimless worship into pity and love for their fellows—a common companionship of sympathy, as it might be called—which no doctrine or dogma of their vanished faith could equal?'

'I could tell them what this insulted science is capable of revealing,' still ran my meditations, as I moved through the lamplit streets of the beautiful city I had chosen for my home. There was no flavor of chagrin or annoyance in these reflections. I had almost forgotten the Rev. Mr. Terebinth, with his wild onslaughts against the clear, stolid immobility of fact. I was thinking of my own unapproached discovery.

On reaching my own residence I found a letter from Floyd Demotte waiting me. I read it with positive torture. It conveyed to me a patronage that was both astonishing and execrable. It regretted my absence; it deplored my disposition toward solitude; it professed a warm regard for my society; it dwelt upon my unhappy predilection for science; it prophesied that I would find a congenial soul in Washington, of the feminine, wifely kind; it cracked a joke or two at my protracted celibacy; it referred me to the amiability and tender reciprocity of Millicent; it—

But I will pause here. The letter, as I have said, tortured me. If I had never been really jealous of Demotte before, I was madly jealous of him now. He gave me no sign that Millicent had shown him my own letter; if he had done so there might even have been some com-



fort in that revelation ; it might have argued to me a vague indication that his old unrest had broken out afresh, with myself for its indeterminate cause. But, as it was, the whole letter made me grind my teeth together and think, 'How happy he is, and how insolent in his happiness ! . . . And yet . . . *I could dispossess him of his happiness, if I chose.*'

If I chose ? Would I, after all, choose ? Somehow the Rev. Mr. Terebinth's anathemas against science pierced through my memory, just then. But above them rose the glowing and lovely face of Millicent.

That night I lost myself. A certain moral bond shrivelled into nullity. I went to bed, and slept a calmer sleep than I had known for many previous nights. I awoke refreshed, yet obdurate. Henceforth, as I but too clearly understood, there was to be no hesitation, no backsliding, no remorse, no conscientious decrepitude. There was to be nothing except placid action and unswerving will. Pity was a burnt scroll ; let hope rise from its ashes. I had had enough of despair and its devilish janizaries. What I wanted now was full, secure fruition. I was a man who had torn from the Unknowable a wonderful truth. I could use it for my race or—for myself. One path was sublime, one was self-degrading. I took the last.

### XIII.

The next day I began my preparations, with a coolness that surprised myself, for the horrible and unprecedented work which I had now determined to accomplish. The first practical consideration was, how should I approach Floyd Demotte in just the manner at present desirable ? My aim was that we should meet and yet that no one should be aware of our meeting. I was already well known in Washington, despite my persistent retirement. If I disappeared, some day, and was never afterward heard of or seen, such evanishment would cause very wide comment indeed. Still, I at length decided, the adoption of this course would be altogether best. I was not a man who could crawl craftily out of society ; I must perforce make my exit a bold one.

On this plan I finally settled. I would mysteriously disappear—as many another man of prominence had done before me—and never be heard of again. But the one most important point of all was to disappear with sufficient adroitness. If I had been a pursued criminal, personal disguise might have resulted dangerously ; the clever lurking detective may scan a false beard or a fictitious complexion and speedily pronounce it spurious ; but when a man who is neither suspected nor watched quietly makes himself look like somebody else, the chances of his having the masquerade rudely interrupted are slender past precedent.

This was what I aimed to do, and did. One morning I left my quarters in Pennsylvania Avenue. If any one had been following me to spy upon me he would have seen me clad in my usual habit. All that he could have defined as different about my general presentment would have been a small portmanteau, which I carried in one hand.

But I had repeatedly carried this portmanteau before, filled with books borrowed from a certain public library which I patronized. After having a lot of books forwarded me and examining them at my leisure, I would return them in this way, strolling home again with the empty portmanteau, since the library was only a little walk from where I lived. I rarely brought any new books back with me in the same receptacle. I cannot explain just why I did not; most probably my reason was laziness, as there is nothing more bulky and onerous to bear than a packed mass of books. Trifling as this incident may seem, it held for me then a notable import. It meant, or it helped to mean, that I was merely quitting my lodgings as I had done many times previously. No one was watching me pass down upon the street from my abode—or so I felt almost certain. And yet some observer may have thus watched me. But if he did, he could have seen nothing in the least unusual. The result I aimed at was simply and securely to cover my tracks. When I touched foot upon the pavements before my dwelling I took the first step in what must be an eternal exodus. Douglas Duane would never come back to the habitation he had just quitted. The commonplace of my action veiled the beginning of an unparalleled mystery. But I knew that future inquiry might snatch a clue from the merest shred of evidence. And I wished to render the least evidence impossible. There must be no attainable clue.

I had not trusted a single soul. In the library which I frequented was a reading-room, where many newspapers were kept on file, and where I knew of a certain alcove containing books of reference. I entered the building and walked straight to this reading-room. The hour was about eleven o'clock in the morning. The clerk at the desk recognized me and nodded to me. The place was full of visitors. I presently found myself in the small alcove which I have mentioned. It was quite vacant. I waited, listening, for about a minute. Then I began my transformation.

It was not difficult. My portmanteau contained but four articles—a blond wig, a blond beard, a soft hat instead of the conventionally stiff one which I wore, and a bottle of chemical fluid prepared most carefully by myself and of a quality to act instantaneously upon the complexion, dyeing it to a kind of mellow brown in place of my characteristic pallor.

I had arranged everything so accurately beforehand that my strange toilet now lasted hardly longer than two good minutes. My wig was the perfection of art; it dropped on my head and clung there with the fit of a familiar glove. The beard needed but a second for its firm and admirably natural disposition. The soft hat was swiftly substituted for the hat which I had worn. Nothing now remained but the alteration in my facial coloring. A few drops of the fluid, poured into my hollowed hand and then rubbed over my face, produced what I needed no mirror to assure me was just the premeditated effect. I had now undergone a rapid yet entire change of visage, though not of costume. My sole purpose, after this, was to get forth from the reading-room without attracting the least attention. My portmanteau must not be left there in the alcove, especially as I had thrust into it the hat which I

had just taken off. Less trifling matters than this had served as airy thread-like bridges between the known and the unknown. So I moved boldly out into the large apartment, holding the portmanteau, nuisance though I considered it. The superintendent took no notice of me whatever; I had given to my whole demeanor a positively triumphant commonplace. On this latter account, perhaps, I was disregarded by him, although he would not have questioned my right to appear in the reading-room even if he had perceived that I was a perfect stranger. The original law here had been, it is true, that none save members of the library should enjoy the privileges of the reading-room; but this law had become a dead letter, I had heard, for some time past. As it was, I passed toward the door in a loitering way, with a glance at this or that filed newspaper. My portmanteau was a small one, and I tried to hold it as inconspicuously as possible. When I had reached to within about a yard of the door, I cast a furtive gaze all about me. Not a soul was paying me the slightest attention. The superintendent himself was absorbed with a book; the other occupants of the apartment were intent upon their journals or their magazines.

At this particular moment it was a question with me whether or no I could literally vanish from the world of men without leaving a trace behind me. Let me once gain that outer hall, and I would baffle all future inquiry. The superintendent might state hereafter that he had seen me enter the room. But he could give no account of my departure from it. The perfectly ordinary act of going beyond that threshold signified a hiatus in my existence which no efforts of investigation might hereafter bridge. . . . Presently I had got close to the door and had put my hand on its knob. I now swept one more glance in every direction, and with the same result as a brief while ago. Then, hesitating not a second longer, I opened the door and went out.

Past the faintest shadow of doubt I had accomplished exactly what I had planned. Until I wished once more to be Douglas Duane in exterior seeming, I might remain the deftly-disguised individual I now was. I need not have the remotest fear that any eye would penetrate the clever trickery by which I had masked myself. As I walked along the street, a little later, I saw that no one gave me more than the most ordinary fleeting look. I was safe, absolutely and unconditionally safe, from all disastrous exposure. I do not by any means even imply that if I had been a criminal anxious to evade arrest I should not soon enough have had the visible subterfuge to which I had resorted humiliatingly proved fraudulent. But as the case now stood, I tempted no intensity of regard. Nobody thought of looking at me twice, I had become so dull and conventional a person. But if anybody had really found me an object for prolonged contemplation, his scrutiny would, I think, have borne no dangerous fruit. It required, as one might say, a professional eye to pierce my dexterous deceit. And no such eye, as I was very well aware, had any motive or inclination to do it.

That afternoon I took the train for New York. At the station I removed my former hat from the portmanteau, crushed it under my overcoat, and anticipated an opportune moment for quietly thrusting it out of a car-window when the train should be in full motion. As for

the portmanteau, I placed it in the waiting-room and left it there. It was quite empty, then, and bore no indication of him who thus deserted it. Some one would profit by its possession, little dreaming of the object which had caused its abandonment.

Arriving in New York, I secured a room at an obscure hotel, and spent a day in searching for a habitation that would precisely suit my coming intentions. I was fortunate in soon securing just what I desired. It was a floor to lease in a building on Broadway, not far above Prince Street. Below was a big wholesale store. Two stories were devoted to commerce, and mine was the third. There were three large chambers. I at once had them fitted up in the plainest and least ostentatious way. Then I took possession of them. All this time my personal disguise continued unchanged. I had with me several thousands of dollars in bank-notes—all that I had estimated I could possibly spend for a long time to come. In a desk in my lodgings at Washington was my last will and testament, bequeathing all my property to certain excellent charities. Demotte knew of this will; I had mentioned it to him when I made it, months ago, and he had approved it heartily.

A good fortnight had now elapsed. I was at last comfortably settled in my new abode. I had engaged no servants. I dined at restaurants, and chose only resorts of this kind where comment would be unlikely concerning me. Just as I had expected, the New York newspapers began to copy from the Washington newspapers accounts of my mysterious disappearance. But in reading these articles it did not strike me that any great concern was shown as to my having disappeared at all. I was gone, and gossip, wonderment, curiosity, all wagged their heads. But I was not an important member of society. Even the extent of my wealth was ill known. One journal declared me a poor man; another asserted that I was eccentric and miserly, with a possible fortune of about fifty thousand dollars. Some hostile inventions greeted me regarding my private life, and a few astonishing falsehoods accredited to the servants I had left in Washington—though I had left each of these with his or her wages paid more than to the full of what I had owed.

One clear preliminary task was now before me. An apparatus of a certain sort must be constructed within my new abode. For so constructing it I of course required aid, and this I invoked from various different sources, not wishing that any one assistant whom I engaged should have it in his power to give testimony of the actual work toward which he had lent his energies.

And at last this work was thoroughly completed. My apparatus rose before me in perfect readiness. And for what? . . . A wild elation filled my soul as I realized *for what*.

The entire arrangement was on a much larger scale than that which I had before dealt with. Instead of a small vessel to contain the liquid whose decomposing power was so fleet and fierce, I had caused a tank to be constructed large enough to wholly submerge myself within its contents when it should be filled, and to do this very easily, at a moment's notice. The mixture was of so costly a nature that I almost

trembled lest my funds might not be sufficient, after all, to purchase its various ingredients in such quantities; and Douglas Duane could not draw another dollar of his own fortune without revealing the personality which he had done so much to hide, and which he soon hoped forever to annihilate. As for the machine itself, it had been finally tested and seen to be in faultless working-order. Every tube, wheel, coil, plate or cylinder was admirably sound and well-disposed. It all silently waited the one mighty trial of its capabilities. That trial should be made immediately. I had no reason and no inclination for postponing it.

My blood tingled in my veins with a fervid expectancy when I reflected upon it. Without a vestige of fear, I was still by no means free from pangs of conscience. But that eager joy of anticipation which I can compare to nothing so much as to a childish catching of the breath before the occurrence of some long-desired festivity, had deadened in me the moral monitions and intimations. Then, too, I had striven to reach a rational comprehension of my curious situation hereafter. Remorse would necessarily cease, on my assumption of a new body. I would *become* Floyd Demotte; my consciousness would thenceforward be his consciousness, and it was hardly permissible for me to even imagine that my memory would not become his memory as well. It was plain to me that no spiritual inheritance like that which is generally understood by the phrase 'human soul' had ever befallen any living being. All that man possessed was all that animal or plant or mollusk possessed, save in a weaker degree. It was merely a vital principle, which in entities of a similar species I had found the secret of translating from one to another organism. When I died I would die eternally. But a new life would be born for me a second or two later, and that life would have no possible knowledge of those events which had led me to the unprecedented appropriation of Demotte's physical shape. It would be, I tranquilly insisted, as though Demotte should fall into a slumber from which he afterward awaked still securely and incontestably himself, though with amazement at certain conditions of encompassment. For example, he would discover that he lay within a repository of glass, perhaps having already reached a state of semi-asphyxia through the very limited supply of oxygen which his odd, transparent prison contained. But close at his side he would see a huge iron hammer, one blow of which could shatter this vitreous coffin into fragments. He might wound himself a little in making his exit, for he would be entirely without garment of any sort, naked as when he first came into the world. But his clothes would lie near at hand. He might marvel, conjecture, ruminate; he might ask himself a hundred questions as to the cause of my having thus brutally, extravagantly and ridiculously ill-used him; but he would be unable ever to answer his own tumultuous queries except in a single way—I had sought by some hideous scientific means to murder him outright. For myself—my dead, extinguished self—that magnificence of discovery would forever be lost to mankind. Not truly forever, perhaps; some future mind might light upon it and use it to nobler, less egotistic ends. But I would be no longer I; Floyd Demotte would have irrevocably taken my place. I



could never know a single pang on account of the fame I had bartered. But I would know the love of a dear and enchanting woman, and she would return my love, not even vaguely surmising (as I also would not then vaguely surmise) the whole incomparable tragedy and horror.

I had not, in my many walks about town, approached the dwelling of Demotte and Millicent. But now, at last, on a certain clear, mild, salubrious morning—one of those mornings which rise amid our mutable American winter with a prophecy of the biting, arctic change a few hours may bring—I sought Second Avenue and drew near the well-known modest little basement-house. I passed it, but on the opposite side of the street. My intention was to wait the emergence of Demotte. If he came forth alone, I would begin unhesitatingly the advances on which I had determined. If not, or if he failed to come forth at all, I would simply delay my attempt. Of course I was still disguised, and with an extreme care that now made the disguise very nearly impenetrable.

As it turned out, I had a surprisingly short time to wait. I had not taken up my post of observation longer than ten minutes when I perceived him coming through the vestibule that opened on his low stoop. I at once slipped across the street and accosted him.

"For Mr. Demotte, sir," I said, handing him a note which I had devised and written that very morning.

He took the note, saying, "I am Mr. Demotte." Then he glanced at the handwriting, and gave a great start. But looking at me a minute later, he added, "How did you know who I am?"

"I saw you leave the house, sir," I answered.

"But you do not know me by sight?"

"No, sir."

He seemed as if about to reproach me for the imprudence I had shown; then, remembering the note, he broke its seal. As he did so he said, "Is there any answer?"

"Yes, sir; I think there is."

Meanwhile he had already begun to read these lines from myself:

"DEAR FLOYD,—I am in New York. I have something very important to tell you. Can you not come to me immediately with the bearer of this? He will accompany you, if you do not object. My quarters are not far from here.

"Yours in great anxiety,  
"DOUGLAS DUANE."

The effect of this note upon Demotte was instantaneous and severe. He turned pale, and his eyes swept my face with so much avidity and intentness that for a while I felt keen dread lest the deception I was practising might burst upon him.

"Tell me," he asked, with excitement. "Is Mr. Duane ill?"

"No, sir."

He scanned my dress. "You are in his employ, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"This note says you—you will take me to him."

"I will, sir."

"Very well. I will go with you at once." As I made a prompt movement to cross the street again he drew closer to me. "How long has he been back from Washington?"

"Only a few days, I believe, sir."

He seemed on the point of questioning me once more. Then he shook his head, as if that course might result in no useful information; for I had sedulously cultivated a manner of much dulness. A little later he looked back at his own house. I feared that he was about to act on some idea of returning and communicating to his wife what had just passed between us. If he had done this he would have wrought a most unsatisfactory disturbance in my whole prearranged scheme. I could easily enough have presented myself at Demotte's residence, by this method of procedure running the risk of Millicent's knowledge whither her husband was going—for in the event of my being asked Douglas Duane's address I must have given it. But I had no wish that Millicent should become aware either of the note or of her husband's personal response to it.

But whatever thought may have crossed Demotte's mind, he soon turned to me again and said sharply, "Well, let us be off at once."

"All right, sir," I answered. A sense of surpassing exultation had begun to thrill me, as I believe it never has thrilled another would-be murderer since the commencement of time. For I was that—murder must be the sole just name for the deed whose dark edge I had now approached. And yet in a certain way the charge of cowardice did not so nearly apply, after all, to my meditated treachery. For I was about to fling away my own individual life—to experience, perhaps, the full pangs of death—to confront mysteries that my science had never yet sounded—possibly to meet, indeed, at what I had believed the very flush of victory, an overthrow and a degradation for which the fable of the rebellious Satan himself could alone furnish apposite precedent.

Still, I offer no extenuating clauses in this the history of my strangely unexampled crime. Those who have followed my narration thus far either will have found for me some vestige of excuse and palliative through the magnitude of the temptation I underwent, or will clothe my action in hues of an entirely unpardonable baseness. But I do not seek to exculpate my career; I am simply recording its fact and confessing the motives which governed it.

Demotte scarcely spoke ten words to me as we now struck westward into the big, bustling purlieus of the Bowery, and then through side-streets toward that region of Broadway in which my rooms were located.

All this transit now seems to me possessed by the influences of delirium. I cannot recollect the exact course we took. The buildings and the people we passed melted by me with the dimness of landscape seen from a swiftly-darting railway-train. . . . When we at last stood together in the chamber which I had designed for Demotte's reception, I felt a sudden wholly new horror overpower me. What if my tingling nerves and throbbing brain should play me false at this final hour when I needed, above all things, coolness, precision and courage?

Breaking through the turmoil under which I was covertly struggling, came Demotte's composed but insistent voice:

"Where is Mr. Duane? Can I see him at once?"

"Yes, sir," I answered, and passed into another room, shutting the door behind me.

#### XIV.

Somehow, the moment I had thus left him, calmness came back to me. I tore off my disguises, used upon my face a preparation that speedily dispelled its altering stain, and wrought one or two rapid changes of apparel. The whole proceeding lasted a surprisingly short time. Every preparation had been made for it. A large mirror soon showed me that Douglas Duane was now undeniably his former physical self, without one betraying hint of his past studious masquerade.

I opened the door. As I have said, I was very calm again, by this time. Demotte sprang toward me the instant that he saw and recognized me.

"Douglas!" he exclaimed, grasping my hand and shaking it with great warmth. "Has anything unfortunate happened to you? You look pale, my dear fellow. Why did you send for me in that curious style?"

"There were reasons, Floyd," I answered. "Come into the next room, please;" and I led the way thither. A curtain hid my one chief apparatus from sight; but in a general manner the chamber looked like a laboratory.

Death must be inflicted on this man in a peculiar way. I had made ready a certain chair, and had connected it with wires to a battery of great power, and one capable of easily killing by shock. In my future essay the character of this battery will be carefully described, and the extraordinary difference between the electro-motive vigor which I had compelled it to generate and that of the Bichromate cell, the Delaurier, the Peroxide of Manganese, the Leclanché, the Grenet, the Highton, or any of all the numerous cells now in vogue.

The instant that Demotte seated himself in the chair I had only to take a few steps back of him and to place my hand on a comparatively small instrument, set well within the shadow of a large cabinet, for the destructive power to leap through every fibre of him with the celerity of a lightning-stroke. The chair was of metal, but it had been so painted and adorned as to resemble the rest of the furniture in the room.

I paused just before the fatal chair and pointed to it. "Will you sit, please?" I said.

"But, Douglas," he exclaimed, still standing, and catching at my arm, with a world of friendly inquiry in his gaze. "Tell me——"

"I will tell you everything very soon," I interrupted, gently disengaging myself from his hold; "but grant me a little time—just a little time, I beg of you." And then, with a quiet vehemence, I pushed him down into the chair, placing a hand on each of his shoulders. After he was seated I stooped over him, smiling. "You shall learn everything soon," I went on. "Promise me to just sit there and wait my announcements."

He glanced up at me, breaking into a laugh. He caught my hand and pressed it. "Dear Douglas!" he said, "I *will* wait. I'll do anything you say! I'm so glad to see you again!"

I got my hand away from his. Those words, every one of them, were like separate stabs from a dagger. I moved behind his chair. I did not want him to see if my face was working. I felt horribly agitated again, but it was a new sort of agitation. I could control myself, so long as I was beyond the chance of encountering the frank look from his genial blue eyes, with their old, well-known, feminine sparkle.

"Very well," I managed to answer, when I was once quite in the rear of his chair. "Only sit there for a moment, and I will come back to you, Floyd, and tell you everything."

The death that I meant him to die was as painless a one as human conjecture could devise. It would be a precipitate and deadly paralysis of all vital functions. He would never know what had harmed him. There would be no wound—no lesion of any sort that the keenest search of surgery could discover. The leaping death-fluid would deprive him of life, tearing from every atom of his organization the wondrous principle which had fed it. His residual body would present, after the extinction of vitality, no one special point where it had been enfeebled by violence. The physical man would remain precisely as uninjured as before my new, marvellous agent of extermination had struck its framework. If I had had a doubt to the contrary of this fact, I should have quailed before a fresh warning of failure. But I had no such doubt. I knew too well the unmatched nature of the force I had been fated to discover.

"Just as you please," he called out to me, laughingly. And those were his last words. I had already reached the instrument with which the dread mediums communicated. . . I looked round once, to see if he still sat there. Then I grasped the small brass knob that must mean death to him.

I waited for perhaps ten seconds. No least sound came to me. Then I turned and went to where he sat. His head had fallen backward so that the white bulging line of his throat seemed to flare at me. His eyes were still open. I knelt and put my ear against his heart. Not the faintest throb. He was dead.

And now it was my turn to die!

I hurried to the curtain that draped my precious apparatus. I flung the curtain aside. The whole complex thing glared to me with a dumb, spiteful challenge. Had I the courage to go on with my wild work? it seemed to ask.

'Yes,' my hot intent responded. The empty tank stared up at me with its void like the dull eye of a scoffing demon. I seized the baleful drugs that stood in great jars near it and poured them within its hollow. As I emptied the last jugful a sound came to me from the commingling acids like the hiss of a hundred inter-writhing adders. . . I now sprang to the corpse of Demotte. I stripped it with impetuous speed, I made it still more molecularly sensitive in a way I cannot now explain, and then I lifted it in my arms, without a thought of its weight, into the receptacle previously made ready for it. There he lay, disrobed

and dead. I closed the curving glass lid over him. Then I paused for a few seconds. All was ready. I had only to take the last awful step. I dared not meditate upon it, and so suddenly tore my garments from my body, until I presently stood as denuded as was the corpse of Demotte. The tank of seething liquid, deep and wide, a horrible bath of death, was now waiting for me. I stood before it, and looked upon its surface, where coils and hisses yet told of the horrid agencies I had convened. 'Oh, what fools these chemists are!' I remember thinking. 'With all their innumerable compounds, they have never hit upon this one mightily destructive combination!'

Then I thought of Millicent. I do not believe that I hesitated at all after I had made her image clear within my mind. Her name, if I am not in error, was uttered by me as I leaped on the ledge of the tank and then dropped downward, with its virulent tide completely submerging me. . .

Strangely enough, after what seemed a short interval of frightful pain, I had no sensation of death. I seemed to be flying through infinite space, and yet my feeling of relief was exquisite. I had suffered untold tortures, but I was now entirely at peace. The driving and rending, the bursting and shattering of my brain had ended. Immeasurable visions, as of enormous planets swinging round enormous suns, and seen with an eye to which the eye of mortal sight is contemptibly feeble, had rushed upon me. It was with me as though space had laid bare all her ethereal strongholds of glittering secrets. The feeling of disembodiment, of volatility, of splendid, untrammelled liberty, was a rapture no language can portray. Time, as I now deduce, could no longer either measure or concern my transports. I had passed completely out of time. It did not then occur to me (how should it?) that I was *still I*, and that the vital principle which I had so firmly believed an unconscious force when freed from material bonds could not only be and think but could be sublimely and think miraculously. And yet I was aware that I still lived, a naked soul, an essence of deathless intelligence and glorious capacity. The answers to a thousand mysteries of life, of nature, of science, of instinct, of religion, of even deity itself, shone before me in luminous and magnificent revelation. The problem of human suffering was no more a vexation; it had become lucidly solved. The whence, the whither and the wherefore both of mankind and of all creation—those riddles which have tortured philosophy for so many futile centuries—were as plain to my comprehension as the radiant wheeling spheres which I gazed on were plain to my rarefied and emancipated vision. The universe had eloquently and irrefutably explained itself. My past scepticism, pessimism and negation had shrivelled to nothingness as dry leaves would do if dropped into the white blinding fire of a furnace. But existence was not merely a divine expansion, possession and acceptance of the loftiest spiritual joy. It was more; it was a sacred fellowship with eternity—and eternity, like matter, beamed on me denuded of the least conceivable vagueness. Every perished or sentient creed of the world stretched before me as links in one immense necessary chain of circumstance. I saw atheism as it had been and as it still was, and neither condemned



nor approved it; I simply understood its cause, its use, its meaning. I saw the long passionate drama of inextinguishable faith enacted throughout mankind here on my own little planet (and what an atom our earth looked among the grandeurs of other millions of globes!), and neither pitied martyrdom nor regretted persecution; both were effects and events of a development whose origin and terminus transcended inquiry.

But abruptly, in the midst of this noble and seraphic exaltation, this piercing and triumphant omniscience, a shade, a chill, a blight, fell upon me. I cannot put in words what I felt. It was not so much a realization of my freed and immortal personality being unfit for the exquisite happiness I had thus far enjoyed as it was a burdening, horrifying conception of my having deliberately flung aside and even murdered impulses of right in my past life by conniving at the death of a fellow-creature. All the unutterable beauty and brilliancy of my encompassments took suddenly an accusative aspect. The lights of the great, lovely stars yet burned all about me, and shapes of untold harmony and grace yet floated on every side of me, but a darkness—or something that I can call by no other name than darkness, though it was not what we mean on earth by that word—had crept with a fleet and fearful stealth between my perceptions and the enchanting prospects I observed. . . It seemed to me that a wild cry of supplication and of anguish now broke from my lips. "*My sin! my sin!*" I moaned, or seemed to moan. And at the same instant the blackness of that sin grew a close-encircling gloom and horror. . . The effulgence and majesty of my surroundings faded. . . The universality of knowledge which had lit my mind died into an ignorance that left only a pathos of dim memory behind it, faint as the trail of a flying meteor on the dusky paths of heaven. And then came night, dense, weighty, ineludible, befogging thought, that seemed to flicker and struggle like the blown flame of a candle before extinction leaps on it. . .

I awoke with a sense of agonizing suffocation. That other torture had been no worse than this. I was conscious of the glass that enveloped me; I was even aware of the iron hammer near by, yet I could not bring myself to make use of it for what seemed an interminable period. At last, with an effort that was like the breaking of some stout fetter, I clutched it, gave it an upward swing, and felt instantly the relief that this destructive blow afforded.

I was lucky enough to get clear of my curious, splintery cage without any awkward hurt. I was soon standing in the centre of the apartment, giddy, somewhat tremulous, but with a speedily augmenting conviction of my own vigor. Remembrances of the delights and wonders I had just known were still floating through my brain, like the fragments of a thousand ruined pictures. At the moment I had taken my suicidal plunge I had glanced at a clock on the opposite wall. I now glanced again at this clock. Exactly two minutes had passed. A sharp cry of incredulity broke from me. The interval had been more like a year.

As I approached a mirror and gazed upon what was now my new physical self, I shivered from the assault of a consternation and an affright for which no innate certainty of what I was about to behold

had served adequately to prepare me. But as I continued regarding the image in the mirror, this unforeseen discomfort gradually passed away—though another, more severe and not at all transient, soon took the place of it. I had become Floyd Demotte in every outward seeming, every trait of lineaments and of figure. *But I was still myself.* The prodigious experiment had succeeded, and yet its very success had flung at me a gibe of failure! I had mastered one superhuman task, only to find another, of inexplicable sort, to baffle and mock me forever. I had disproved materialism, but I had disproved it in my very effort to confirm it. I had sought the verification of a fixed belief in the dumb, blind irresponsibility of what hundreds of seers had claimed to be angelically opposite; and now, cowering, I saw the cheerless immensity of my mistake. But retraction was impossible. If the soul was god-like, gods could fall, and mine had irretrievably fallen. I had not merely stained my spirit with dreadful crime, I had wedded it indissolubly to the fleshly and palpable evidence of that crime itself. I must henceforth bear a brand worse than that of Cain; for he merely carried, as the legend tells, a badge and memento of remorse. But I must live through the remainder of my days as an incarnate remorse—a murderer prisoned till death *within the shape of the being he had murdered!*

I staggered backward from the mirror, whose coldly unflinching testimony had now grown like the most maddening of jeers. I wrapped my shivering form in a garment that lay near at hand, and flung myself, palsied with horror, upon the floor of the chamber. . . 'And this,' I thought, 'is the summit of my triumph—the *comble de bonheur* of my undaunted aims! Ah, ghastliest of expiations! The vulture that gnawed at the vitals of Prometheus was but the sting of a gadfly compared with such unremitting torment as mine! My very shadow will be a perpetual accusation. It will be *his* shadow no less than mine, and it will dog me with inexterminable persistence, with spectral and loathsome patience, till I die! At night I will lie awake in my bed and feel my flesh creep with the atrocious thought of how his corpse clasps me, engirds me, weighs upon me. His own words of warning, spoken long ago in my laboratory, would recur to me in mockery and in vengeance; perhaps my lips—*his* lips—would repeat them amid torturing dreams: "*Men of supreme ability, like yourself, are sometimes entrapped and betrayed by their own powers.*" He prophesied, then, that such entrapment and betrayal might be madness, and I resented his very suggestion as an insolence. Best if madness were to come now. It might deteriorate and brutalize intellect, and thus deaden suffering. . . What other help can there be for me? Suicide? No man who has known and seen *beyond death* would ever voluntarily seek death. He who kills himself always takes the chances of an eternal sleep.

"For in that sleep of death what dreams may come, . . .  
Must give us pause."

How clear a truth the poet-sage struck there! . . . No, nothing remains to me now but life—and that life a long, slow, inexorable hell!

Thus I mused, when suddenly a bright spark of comfort dawned

upon me. I remembered Millicent. I remembered why this black sin had steeped me in its guilt. I had forgotten her till now, and now a passionate surge of recollection seemed pulsing through brain and blood alike. . . I rose, thrilling with this new hope of comparative peace. If I still had the soul of Douglas Duane I could still love with his unaltered love. I would go to her at once—as soon as I could hide or destroy every tangible record of what had lately occurred within these chambers. A few traces must remain; let them. They would not be compromising; how could they be? No one had seen Floyd Demotte enter here with his perished companion. I would soon slip out, unnoticed, into the busy turmoil of Broadway.

The stimulus which now supported and fortified me was unutterably welcome. I drank, during the process of assuming Floyd Demotte's garments, one or two glasses of a rare old wine with which I had provided myself. These draughts acted cordially and soothingly upon me. I grew able to think like my former self, and to exert all my natural faculties of caution. I had a sudden dread lest my voice might be different from Demotte's, and spoke several sentences aloud in order to test the dissimilarity, if any existed. And here I made a singular discovery. The voice was his, just as of old, since it issued from the same throat, the same lungs. But occasionally it rang with a new, an uncharacteristic note. Every now and then it sounded like my own former voice. But I found that this eccentricity was one greatly if not entirely under my own control. And the same, I presently assured myself, with regard to my handwriting. The general formation of the letters undoubtedly was Demotte's; but sometimes, for a word or a whole sentence, it would lean toward a resemblance of my own. Here, however, the variation was much less apparent than in my voice, for I had always had a handwriting that in no marked way differed from Demotte's, and these lapses of which I speak would probably have been noticeable to few other eyes than mine. As for writing continuously in the hand of Douglas Duane, I doubt if I could have done so except with extreme effort; nor could I, for the same recondite causes, have used habitually my previous voice. What took hold of me thus incidentally was from remoter psychic sway; what governed me in all common daily acts must spring directly from the conditions of that body and temperament in which I had found such eerie and reluctant habitation.

When at last all was ready for the consummation of my audacious work—for the bringing myself face to face with her whose love would be the rich reward of my pain and the holy lenitive of my future compunction—I went forth into the great noisy thoroughfare. I felt my courage quail as I began this fateful journey. And yet I clinched my teeth together and swore that I would be tranquil as ice. Why should I not be? I had nothing to fear as disclosure, as overthrow. I had everything to gain as recompense, consolation, alleviation and reanimated hope.

It was now late in the afternoon. The treacherous December day, recently so serene, had undergone the most gusty and rigorous change. The brief winter term of sunshine would soon fade, to leave biting

blasts behind it. The very roll of the wheels on the stones had taken a harsher and more strident clatter as they smote my ears through the dry, frigid yet whirling air. People passed me with bowed heads and hurrying steps, as I crossed eastward to the home of Millicent—to *my home*. A fancy beset me that they were all shunning me with one common, instinctive avoidance, as something leprous and repugnant.

During my walk I chanced to note the window of a small shop in one of the transverse streets not far from Broadway. It was filled with pistols of various forms and sizes. I had never carried fire-arms, hating the practice as I hated them. But now a thought, a fear, perhaps a prognostication, made me pause and fascinatedly scan the exhibited weapons. Suicide must at any time be a frightful alternative, now; and yet if Millicent . . . I did not dare to finish the hated speculation. But soon afterward I went into the little shop and purchased one of the pistols.

Then I moved once more toward my destination. The sword-like gales were sweeping through the streets with a still wilder impetus. They struck straight in my face; they had the effect of buffeting me back in my course, or striving to do it, and the long, bleak croons of sound that they made in the house-tops under the pallor of the dimming skies were like voices of elfin dissuasion.

But I bore steadily onward. Not to do so at this one most pregnant and emphatic hour of my whole insolent career would have been to die in preference, deeply as I had grown to abominate the recourse of death.

I presently reached the house. I did not ring. Why should I? The latch-key that *he* had always used was here in my pocket. I entered, quietly, as *he* had always done.

## XV.

I looked into the little familiar sitting-room on the ground-floor. No one was there. A fire crackled on the hearth, sending its flashes in the early dusk over a portrait of *him*. Some reddish transits of light made the face leer and then scowl at me. I shuddered, drawing backward and putting a hand to my throat. Perhaps I thus repressed a cry that Millicent might have heard if it had really escaped me. For it would have been a keen cry; and the door of her apartment was open, as I found a little later, when I had passed up-stairs and met her there.

She came toward me with a smile. Her face was full of the most loving fondness. "Dear Floyd," she said, "what a long time you have been away!"

I shut the door; I remember perfectly doing this. My inward agitation was such that I felt wretchedly uncertain of my own actions. If some hideous betrayal of the truth *should* result, I desired no chance servant to look on it.

She had drawn at once very close to me. She lifted her lips to mine, and kissed me. She took my hand in hers. "How cold you

are!" she said. "I had this fire lighted. I was half perished, myself. It's such a sudden change, isn't it?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Come to the fire," she went on, drawing me thither. Then she let go my hand, and wheeled a big chair in front of the blaze. "There!" she exclaimed, about to push me into the cushioned fastness. But suddenly she paused, laughing. "You haven't taken off your overcoat, have you?" And she began to unloosen its buttons.

I let her help me with the release from the overcoat. It fell into her hands after I was free from it, and she tossed it aside somewhere, while I sank into the seat she had provided. And then, very quickly, she found herself another chair, and placed it close to mine. At once, after that, she took both my hands and chafed them against her own, as though to dissipate their chill.

"Now do tell me," she said, earnestly and anxiously, "what luck you have had."

"What luck?" I questioned.

"Yes. You know. About——" She stopped short as I withdrew my hands and stretched them forth as if to get the warmth of the fire better that way.

"About . . . ?" I said. "You mean, Millicent, my dear . . . ?"

"Why, about poor Douglas."

"Oh! . . . Douglas. . . Yes."

How otherwise could I answer her? Plainly, she referred to some quest or train of inquiry on which Demotte had started when she had last bidden him adieu. Of any such errand I was inevitably ignorant. There was now a little silence, while I still sat warming my hands and staring at the blaze.

"Well?" she at length asked.

I half turned my face toward her, in my new anxiety. "Well?" I repeated. The monosyllable had an imbecile sound to my own ears.

She gave an impatient gesture. "You can't mean," she exclaimed, with a hurt inflection just hinted in her voice and no more, "that you would jest with me, Floyd, on so grave a subject as this? Or have you some good news that you are keeping from me, fearing too happy a surprise?"

"Good news?" I murmured. Then, with the necessity imminent of my adding something, no matter what, "No, I haven't a scrap of good news. Did you think that I would have any?"

"Yes. I thought so,—and I need not say, as well, that I hoped so with all my heart. You remember what they wrote us three days ago?"

"Yes."

"About that Madison Avenue property, I mean. If they did not receive advices from him soon, his failure either to communicate with them or to appear in person might be a loss for Douglas of thousands of dollars."

Here was light at last. My New York real-estate agents had charge of the Madison Avenue property. Evidently Demotte had told her early in the day that he was going to visit them, and she now alluded to this accredited incident.



"Ah, Billings and Storrs," I ventured. "Yes." Then I waited.

"Well, you saw them?" she presently queried.

"No."

"No? Why, you left me for that purpose."

"I—I changed my mind."

"Changed your mind, Floyd?" Her voice rang amazingly.

I would have given a year off my life to have answered her differently—to have told her that I *had* seen the real-estate men and that they had as yet learned nothing. But retraction was now too late. I could not contradict myself; I could only seek in some manner to justify the contradiction that my miserable embarrassment had perversely forced me into employing.

"Yes," I said. "It seemed best that we should wait." I turned and looked at her full, now, in the firelit dusk. "It seemed best, Millicent, for one very imperative reason."

"What is that?" she quickly inquired.

"Douglas's own possible inclinations." My head, so to speak, was getting cooler as my body grew warmer; I had begun to see the sheer folly of not using what acumen I could. Hereafter I would be compelled, in a hundred fresh instances, to use so much! How should I hope for successful deception then, or anything in the least resembling it, if I proved myself thus absurdly skillless and unwary at the outset of my coming task? "We *must* consider," I went on, "that Douglas was not an ordinary person, either in his disposition or his habits. Provided he has chosen to vanish from the community for a certain interval of time, may he not desire above all things that no effort be made on the part of friends and acquaintances to discover his whereabouts? Is not that precisely the feeling which a man like Douglas would entertain?"

I knew that I was making the most desperate and random calculations, now, and I so dreaded the effect of them that her look of complete amazement found me prepared to meet it.

"Why, Floyd! What wonderful change has come over you! Think of how differently you spoke this very morning. You said then that you did not believe there was a chance of Douglas having deliberately buried himself like that. And now——"

Here I perceived an opportunity for using what would be boldness and yet not mere headlong folly as well. "And now," I broke in, "I have got to look at the matter in a wholly new light."

"So . . . suddenly?" she faltered

I laughed. She sprang to her feet as I did so. The dusk had now become so deep that I could hardly see her face; but I saw that she was pale. "Is it such a very short time," I continued, "between morning and evening?"

She made no answer. She walked to one of the windows, which had grown squares of glimmering blue in the winter twilight. "How dark it's getting!" she said. The next instant she left the window again and came toward me with a little slipping step, pretty and quite her own. She crouched down beside me, the firelight gilding her soft undulations of hair. "I must be nervous to-night," she exclaimed,

with a faint shiver. "They say these sudden variations of weather in our American climate are apt to set one's nerves all on edge. . . I had a queer fancy, then—*such* a queer fancy! I mean when you . . . you laughed." And here she laughed herself, somewhat brokenly. "I imagined—but never mind. It's too silly."

"Let us hear what you imagined," I said. And now the "*let us*" in these words pierced me by its ghostly pertinence.

"Your laugh, Floyd," she explained, speaking unsteadily, "was was so like *his*."

"Like whose?"

"Douglas's."

"Really?"

She caught one of my hands and began fondling it. "Tell me where you have been all these hours," she demanded. "If you made up your mind not to go to Billings and Storrs, why did you not come home sooner?"

I was somehow ready for this question. I had, in a way, already put myself on the defensive against it.

"Oh, I wandered about among the book-shops," I answered, as nonchalantly as I could manage.

"The book-shops?" she cried, with a new amazement, drawing her hand away from mine. "Why, you must have changed your mind again in a most remarkable manner."

"How do you mean?" I asked, turning toward her once more. She had her back to the light; her face was almost unrecognizably vague.

"Mean?" she repeated, rising. "Did you not say yesterday—only yesterday—that you were tired of collecting books, and that you believed you would never add another to your library as long as you lived?"

I bit my lips in the dimness. "Did I say that, Millicent? Oh, yes; so I did; I recollect. But I suppose this craze of mine will go on for the rest of my life. I may make all sorts of good resolutions, but fail to keep them, nevertheless."

"That isn't like you," she said. She spoke quietly. She had moved several steps away from me. I saw the dark outlines of her figure and the fitful fire-gleams playing upon the folds of her dress; but her features were all in dense obscurity.

"Have I always kept my resolutions with so much obstinacy?" I inquired.

She did not respond for several seconds. "Not obstinacy," she at length said; "firmness."

Immediately after this she went and lit two or three gas-jets of the chandelier, flooding the room with light. She moved here and there about the chamber for a little while, pulling down the shades at both windows and drawing the warm woollen curtains across them. While she thus occupied herself I rose from my chair beside the fire. My heart (*his* heart!) had begun to beat with a terrible perturbation. Had I not greatly miscalculated the taxations of my new rôle? Would I be able to continue it safely? And yet how might one shadow of peril

exist for me? I was proof against detection. Could it even thinkably be otherwise? Suffer whatever misery I might, *she* need know nothing of such ordeal. If I wanted her to live—if I wanted her not to go mad—I would not tell her. And there was no one else to breathe the grisly secret.

I went to the book-laden table set against the wall not far from the fireplace, and took up a volume, turning over its leaves. She came slowly to my side and put her arm about my neck, letting one hand lightly tap the shoulder that was farthest away from her. (I had seen her take just this affectionate posture many times before now!)

"Something seems to have gone wrong with you, my dear Floyd," she murmured, close at my ear. "What is it?"

I gave a soft, careless, deprecating laugh, that did not shock her as my former laugh had done; I had studied, indeed, that it should not. "Why have you formed any such idea?" I replied, still turning over the leaves of the book I held, and not daring to lift my eyes from them. I felt now, for the first time, that there was an ardor of passion within me whose mastery must include the simplest demands of discretion. If I once yielded to this witchcraft that waited my ensnarement, I should find myself so near self-betrayal that actual exposure would hardly prove less disastrous.

"You . . . you are somehow . . . what *shall* I say that you are?" she kept hesitating, and all the while I knew she had bent her head so as to see my face better. "You are . . . *not yourself*, Floyd. I don't know that I can put it any other way."

"Nonsense!" I said, and wondered if the word was too curt, or whether it was curt at all. This strain was beyond my present powers; I should be wiser to quit the room for a little while. My brain was in a whirl one minute, and the next it had a numb, leaden dulness. And how devilishly *à propos* had been that last innocent sentence of hers!

"Oh, well, I suppose it *is* nonsense," she whispered, very fondly. And then she kissed my cheek.

'*You are not yourself, Floyd*,' meanwhile kept ringing in my ears. The touch of her lips had left behind it what might almost have been a little tingling speck of flame. I kept my eyes fixed on the book which I held. I was moved far more than I had any premonition of being moved when I first crossed the threshold of her home. I still did not dare to meet her look. If I had done so, I might impetuously have flung my arms about her and told her everything—until she, in turn, had torn herself from me with disgust and terror.

I must get from the room, just now, and not only seek a more composed demeanor, but seek to learn if my future could not be made exempt from these jars and shocks of guilty trepidation.

And still I dared not meet Millicent's eyes while her arm thus clasped my neck. Delicate as that arm was, it held for me the magnetism of a mighty attraction. Merely to gain a little time, and with time a little helpful self-control, I now said,—

"Have you read this story? And is it worth anything, if you have?"

She suddenly withdrew her arm. "Floyd!" she cried.

I faced her, then, as placidly as I could. "What is it?" I said.

She pointed to the book that I was holding. A look of the keenest anxiety now possessed her.

"That book!" she went on, and with actual excitement. "Don't you *remember*? Why, you were reading it aloud only last night!" She suddenly hurried very close indeed to me and peered into my face. "Floyd," she continued, eagerly, plaintively, "*don't* you remember?"

I affected to glance at the outside title of the book, and then said, with that assumption of rank annoyance which is often the easiest cloak for agitation, "Certainly I remember. I didn't chance to recognize the type, and I hadn't even looked at the name." Here I flung the book on the table.

My explanation diminished her surprise, and her vague distress as well. "Oh, forgive me!" she broke forth, as I walked toward the door of the room. "Are you offended, Floyd? No, surely you're not!"

"Offended?" I returned. "Why should I be?"

"You're going?"

"Yes—to dress for dinner."

"True—it's nearly time, isn't it?" She was fixedly regarding me again. "Floyd," she said.

"Well?"

She had glided up to me with the swiftness of a bird. "Answer me," she began, pleadingly and with an unmeasured sweetness in voice and mien. "If you should ever feel unwell—even the least in the world—you would tell me about it, would you not? You—you wouldn't keep it from me? You would not have any fear of worrying me by letting me know?"

"I should tell you—certainly."

Her nearness thrilled and enticed me once more. She let both her hands rest on my arm. Her tender, appealing eyes, with their gentle, intrinsic splendor which made them unlike the eyes of any woman I had ever met, seemed to brood wistfully upon every feature of my visage. "If you *are* at all ill," she proceeded, with a faint, winsome, sympathetic break in her tones, "our coming voyage will be of benefit, will it not? They say that sea-voyages are marvellous cures for nearly everything in the way of human ailments, except when those are past *all* cure."

"Sea-voyages?" I murmured.

"Yes. . . And that is why your decision about not doing your very best to secure some trace of Douglas struck me as so . . . so peculiar. The time is drawing very near, you know. We sail a fortnight from to-morrow."

"Sail . . . a fortnight . . . from . . . to-morrow." It is my impression that I spoke these words, though I am not just sure that I did so. Her own next words, however, I am sure of; and this is my reason for believing that I so spoke.

"Why, Floyd, didn't you realize that it is to be so soon? How strange if you didn't! You said this very morning, at breakfast——"

I took several steps away from her. I must have been wild, for an instant. "In God's name," I cried, "don't keep forever assailing me with what I did and what I said! I can't endure it!"

"Floyd!"

She pronounced the name with an intonation that I shall never forget. It seemed to me as if she were rather repeating it to her own tumultuous thoughts than calling me by it or directing her observation at all toward me while it was delivered.

And then a horrible after-thought burst upon me as I watched her working, affrighted face: *I had spoken to her in the voice of another than her husband. I had spoken to her in Douglas Duane's voice.* This realization spurred me with a desperate desire to banish the amazement and fear I had aroused. As she receded from me I hurried toward her.

"Millicent!" I exclaimed. "Pardon my having spoken so harshly. Pardon me for——"

But she waved me back. Her face was white. I stared at her with a speechless, doomed sensation while her gaze swept me from head to foot.

"What—what does this mean?" she stammered. "You—you don't know about our—our going to Europe in—in a fortnight from now. I—I saw it by—by the way you answered me. . . My God! have you lost your memory? And then . . then . . *that other voice!* You—you never spoke to me like that—you never spoke as harshly to me as that in all your life—and . . yes, you spoke with *his voice!*"

"No!" I cried, passionately, feeling as if the floor of the room rose and fell beneath me. My torturing embarrassment had wholly vanished. I rushed toward her and clasped her in my arms, against her will. I kissed her lips and brows in a frenzy of anguish and despair. "Millicent! Millicent!" I appealed, "I am your husband! How could it be otherwise? You are mad to dream that my voice is his. How could I speak with a voice not my own? Millicent!——"

She writhed away from me with an audible shudder that I should hear if I were to live centuries. She staggered back from me, and I now saw that her face was livid, her eyes dilated.

"Your—your kisses," she gasped, pressing both hands against her mouth, "are not *his*."

"Not *his*, Millicent?" I had an infernal coolness, now;—now, when it was too late. "Not *whose?*"

"Not Floyd's. I know." It would be impossible for any art of description to convey the mingled solemnity, accusation and apprehension of that "I know."

She was so colorless and so in straits for breath that I thought she might swoon any instant. "Millicent!" I again called to her, and approached her with outstretched hands.

"Don't come near me." She reeled back from me as she thus spoke. "I—I first felt it when—when you laughed, there by the fire. I—I can't put it into words, except to say what would be a—a mad thing to say. . . But don't come near me." Then her face grew so fierce and bitter that she had the look of another woman than herself. "If—if I *were* mad, which I am not, I—I should say that you were . . Douglas Duane."

"Douglas Duane?"

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The name leapt from my lips. I must again have spoken in that other voice. I felt that all was lost, and a fury of recklessness had caught me.

She covered her face for a moment with both hands, and her form swayed as if it might fall wretchedly to the floor with each fresh motion. I darted to her side again, but as my first touch met her frame she dashed her concealing hands away and stood bolt upright before me with a hate and an agony blended in her eyes.

"Douglas Duane!" she said, with a kind of detesting hiss; and as she said it she recoiled.

I felt myself turn icy. She had divined—not guessed or imagined, but divined—the whole truth. What the jurisprudence of the whole civilized world could never have reached, her woman's heart, her woman's nature, her woman's soul, her woman's love, had instinctively, unerringly, effectually found. . .

I moved a little away from her. I am not sure whether or no I screened my face. Perhaps I did not; perhaps I only felt the light a very blackness of darkness. But I must have put my hands against my breast, for in a little while I was conscious of the pistol I had bought less than an hour ago.

There was nothing now for me to live for. Live! To live in this hybrid, monstrous state of being, deprived of her love, for which I had drenched in the worst of crime the imprisoned soul that would ever taunt with untold irony its abominated toils,—what sort of life save clear, dread, unrelieved hell could such a fate accord me? Best to die! . . . But existence lay beyond death—this I had known and tested. There was punishment, too, or, if not punishment, a gloom, a deprivation, an interval of expiation . . . what was it really? I had not known and tested *that*; I had only dimly understood it before the great night dropped over me whose day had been this horrid awakening. . . But if Millicent died, too! If both our souls went out together into that vast Eternity, with its light and its dark both such phantasms of reminiscence! . . . Perhaps some mercy might come to me there at the last. Whatever the retribution was, it might not be endless. *She* would get all that divinity, that exaltation, that unspeakable happiness, at once. But I—— Possibly in the end I might atone, and so meet her. Cleansed of sin, I might find her, as spirit finds spirit.

I was a madman, now. I cannot elucidate my next course of action, apart from seeking to justify it. I must have drawn forth the pistol and have hid it behind me. I retain a faint recollection that Millicent was standing with drooped head and shivering form not far from a lounge, and that one of her hands grasped, as if for support, the back of a chair. It seems to me that I stole almost noiselessly to where she stood, and then——

When the quick, bloody act was done she gave a fearful start. I recall this perfectly, and as her body swerved I seized it, bearing it to the lounge. If she lived a second afterward I do not know. I kissed her once, twice, and then felt the attack of an unutterable dread lest some vengeful fatality should prevent my killing myself. . . My hand shook in a piteous way; I recall trying to raise it, with the pistol still

clined in it, toward my head, and failing more than once. But at last I did not fail. 'There are five other bullets left,' I thought. . . I had used the first. . . It seemed the most thorough surety that out of the five remaining I could win what I craved. . . This is all that I can remember before I fired the suicidal shot, following the murderous one. . .

(*Note.*—The remainder of Floyd Demotte's manuscript is brief, but wretchedly incoherent. On the day these final passages were written he was seized with that final fit of epilepsy which resulted in his death. The writer seems to have realized his own weakness, having been often interrupted before during the perpetration of his so-called confessions by similar fits of illness. Much of the two or three pages of half-undecipherable writing which now follow relates to his comprehension of failing capacity and his regret that the wonderful (?) law discovered by Douglas Duane should not have been scientifically formulated, as he proposed in his strange so-called biography. It is probable that the last attack of his recurring disorder came upon him while he was writing, and that he struggled against it, determinedly making sentence follow sentence, as a drunken man might do, with the conviction that he was forming a lucid and legible text. Nothing has been repressed in the manuscript here preserved except passages of so rambling and aimless a character as to harm the quaint and romantic value of the whole remarkable but entirely insane recital.

Signed by { *The names of four well-known physicians in the Bloomingdale Asylum for the insane, New York.*

## THE EPILOGUE.

### XVI.

Ford Fairleigh broke into a rather hilarious laugh, with a strongly personal ring to it, when Hiram Payne, after a sleepless night over the manuscript which had been confided to him, duly kept his promise and returned the perused roll of paper.

"You look as if you'd seen a ghost, Hiram," said Fairleigh jocosely.

"Oh, no, not that," returned Payne, with neutral serenity.

Fairleigh laughed again, in a crisp way. "Oh, I dare say you believe every word of this trash."

Payne shook his head. They were in their little chamber closely adjoining the police head-quarters. A good, brave fire of hard-coals was burning in the hearth. Payne seemed to be studying every separate fierce interstice of these coals as he responded,—

"Well, I think there are several rather curious points."

"I expected it!" exclaimed Fairleigh, who stood against a flank of the steady blaze, as though he was a little afraid of the effects of its full fervors upon his nimble and active frame. "What *are* your points, old

fellow? Come—name them, my boy, and I'll refute them, or try to. The man was a jealous fiend. That's all."

"Oh, I don't doubt, Ford, that you'll try to refute my theories," answered Payne, rather dreamily. "Still," he pursued, "I *will* give them, as they occur to me. Mind you, however, I don't do so as a believer in the truth of these confessions."

"Oh, no; of course you don't," replied Fairleigh, with unfathomable courtesy. "Still, there's only one explanation. Demotte shot his wife from mad jealousy—nothing more."

Payne coughed a little dispiritedly. "In the first place," he said, with his usual loitering repose, "I should consider the whole question of illusion on Floyd Demotte's part singularly improbable. Crazy men have very strange wills-o'-the-wisp to haunt them, I am well aware, but this one would appear to move in a very orderly manner and without any suspicious zigzags."

"True enough," Fairleigh returned. "But what one might call the superficial sanity of the insane is a widely accepted fact. This Demotte, I should say, might have been a novelist, or at least a teller of logical and effective short stories, if fate had not placed his annual income so high up among the thousands."

"Do you mean," asked Payne, with a kind of sceptical narrowing of the eyelids that was not lost upon his companion—"do you mean, Ford, that you believe this entire history has been a deliberate invention?"

"An invention? Yes. A deliberate one? Well, it would be hard to state just where cunning ended and spontaneity began. Floyd Demotte had committed a great crime; his madness protected him from the gallows, but it did not shield him from present or even posthumous obloquy."

"And you think he wanted to mitigate the latter?"

"Yes."

"And that on this account he tried to throw a mysterious and romantic interest over his lot?"

"That is just what I do think. You have described my meaning so much better, Hiram, than I could ever have done myself. You have such a gift of language."

"Thank you," said Payne sedately. "But in your case, for example, this alleged strategy of Demotte's has failed. You declare yourself not to be fooled by it."

"So I do. But there are a good many loosely-constructed brains in the world."

"Thank you again," said Payne grimly.

"Oh, pray don't mention it," cried Fairleigh, with twinkling eyes but the most serious disposition of his facial muscles.

"And this scientific, mathematical treatise?" questioned Payne, after quite a little pause had followed.

"Stuff—the stuff that dreams are made of."

"I supposed you'd say so. . . But what if he had lived to write that treatise? Do you assert that it would have been mere vacuous, valueless rubbish?"

"Yes. But I'll go further than that, Hiram. I'll assert that Floyd Demotte was well aware he would never *live* to write the treatise."

"Good heavens," murmured Payne, with soft irony; "what a depth of calculation you credit him with! And especially vast, I should say, for a moribund madman."

"*Non omnis moriar*," said Fairleigh, remembering some of his New York College Latin. "That is what Floyd Demotte kept telling himself. He wasn't so mad but that he realized the worth of trying somehow to rehabilitate his shattered repute. A poetical-minded being like you, Hiram, ought to appreciate that kind of human endeavor."

"I do," said Payne dryly. A little later he added, "It is certainly odd, to say the least, how these confessions correspond with all the facts which transpired in the testimony."

"Odd?" queried Fairleigh, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I don't see why it's odd. Demotte had his tale to tell *after* and not *before* those facts did transpire. What he records of Douglas Duane in Washington may or may not have happened. For instance, Duane's having gone to hear the Rev. Dr. Terebinth denounce the brazen idolatries of science might easily be an event manufactured for the embellishment of his whole picturesque story. As for Duane's taking a trip into the extreme West, he may not have been informed of that proceeding, it is true, by his friend himself, but he could readily have learned of it from the current newspapers of the time, many of which included it in their columns about the doings of notable people."

Another little silence ensued, during which Payne sat with his eyes fixed on the floor and an occasional look of incredulity, perplexity, even trouble itself, taking possession of his dreamy, German sort of countenance. Suddenly he lifted his head, and in almost an imperative tone called to his friend,—

"Ford?"

"Well?"

"Why shouldn't the truth or falsity of that narrative be made plain in one way, and one way only?"

"Go on, please, Mr. Machiavelli," encouraged Fairleigh. "Or do you want me to ask in what way? No doubt you do; so I'll ask it."

"I'll reply, then," said Payne, rising, and with a placid directness both of voice and manner which at once told upon his listener. "The confession declares that Douglas Duane's rooms in Broadway were not far above Prince Street."

"I know," Fairleigh responded, in tones of unqualified seriousness and respect. "You are going to tell me, Hiram, that I should have found these rooms, provided they are to be found at all."

Payne bowed his head acknowledgingly. "Yes," he said, "I was going to tell you that."

"Well, . . . I didn't find them. I didn't find anything resembling them."

"You searched for them, Ford?"

Fairleigh laughed. He went up to Payne and put a hand with affectionate candor upon his friend's shoulder. "Dear old boy," he exclaimed, "do you want to insult my talents as a detective of ordina-

rily decent abilities? No, I'm sure you don't. Of course I made a thorough and unrelenting search. But it all came to nothing. I had no difficulty. Almost everybody was civil enough, not merely in the answering of questions but in giving me full permission to search apartments. Naturally, I made plain my legal errand and the uselessness of stupid objection. When I encountered surly revolt, or anything that resembled it, I grew suspicious to the verge of tyranny. . . Oh, I assure you, there wasn't a building, from Prince Street to Waverley Place—and that's a pretty fair distance up-town, as you'll agree—that concealed from me a single chamber. The whole examination took a good many days. Of course expedients of mystification *might* have been resorted to. But what earthly reason would anybody have had for resorting to such expedients? Accepting Douglas Duane's story as true, we must grant he was notably disembarassed of all confederates. If he had left a room filled with the paraphernalia of his recent extraordinary performances, nobody would have been unwilling to show me that room. On the contrary, the desire would have operated in another way. I should have met no reluctance whatever. Why should I have met any? You must allow, Hiram, that this view of my inquiring tour is the sensible view."

"I do allow it," said Payne. He re-seated himself. He stared at the floor again, and for surely three minutes a silence ensued which seemed somehow significant. Fairleigh at length broke this silence.

"There is one event which *you* may think worth considering," said the latter, in a voice that indicated the old relations between the two men, it was so full of stealthy and amused sarcasm.

Payne lifted his head. "What event?" he asked eagerly.

"The fire which occurred that very cold night—it must have been the night of that same day—in Broadway, on the west side, just above Prince Street."

"Ah!" said Payne, starting. "I recollect. It destroyed several large buildings, did it not?"

Fairleigh nodded. "Yes. And more than that. About six people were burned. Among them were a certain janitor and his wife. *There's* food for your theory, Hiram! That janitor, as I have learned, had full leasing-power with regard to three floors above the shops below him. One of those floors may have been that in which Douglas Duane effected his miracle. I'll admit, from all I've since heard, that it was precisely the sort of floor Duane might have chosen. The fire was a frightful one. The cold and the fierce wind made the engines at first almost powerless. That is why the fire wrought such great ravages."

"I remember the fire perfectly," said Payne.

"And it explains everything to you, no doubt," returned Fairleigh, with an abrupt, cool, merciless satire.

Payne shook his head, but his mild blue eyes were glowing unwontedly. "I don't say that it explains anything," he answered. "It seems rather to cut off explanation, short and sharp."

"So it does—you're right," retorted Fairleigh, walking away with an air that seemed to add, 'What is the use of feeding a fanatic on logic?—he hasn't the peptics to digest it.'



Payne sat in his chair, musing, for a considerable time. Fairleigh had thrust both hands into his trousers' pockets, and stood staring, a little doggedly, out of one of the windows.

"Ford," Payne presently called.

"Well?" said Fairleigh, veering swiftly round and facing his companion. "Have you any other remarkable statement to make?"

"Oh, no," replied Payne suavely, with his characteristic quiet. "I only wanted to remind you that Douglas Duane hadn't turned up yet."

Fairleigh gave a kind of sullen, unwilling start. "I know that as well as you do," he broke forth. "Why the devil shouldn't I?"

"Oh, no reason—none at all. He's been missing three months, hasn't he?—three good months."

"Yes," said Fairleigh, and with a clear touch of ill-humor.

"Isn't *that* fact, all circumstances considered, a little . . . well, a little . . . peculiar?"

Fairleigh sent a challenging, irritated, quizzical glance toward his friend. Then he thrust his hands into his trousers' pockets again, and wheeled away.

"Yes," he replied, staring out of the window once more and speaking in a guttural, dogged tone that gave his voice a most unaccustomed ring. "It's . . . well, I admit that it *is* infernally peculiar."

THE END.

## BELGRAVIAN BOHEMIA.

A NUMBER of years ago—perhaps it was in the early days of dear Dicky Doyle—there appeared in *Punch* a picture wherein a bewildered Philistine, finding himself in Bohemia, stands helpless and distraught, gazing about him as though he feared that his money or his life might be demanded. It was only the kindly Bohemia of Thackeray's "J. J." and others of his ilk, and I forget the legend accompanying this delightful bit of pictorial satire. Doubtless it was very piquant and amusing, but of one thing I am certain: the scene was as characteristic of society in that day as are any of Mr. Du Maurier's sketches now. The airy conviviality of the Bohemians—all of whom were doubtless well-bred people—had as decidedly a flavor of their time as have the gracefully easy guests whom we see represented at Mrs. Ponsonby de Tompkins's or Lady Midas's, and who belong to what one may call—for lack of a more inclusive title—the upper ten of the Bohemia in the England that we know. Charmed and sacred haunts there may be still for certain kindred spirits who incline to careless "penny nap" or random sketching at untimely hours. But let me explain at once that into these precincts I shall not wander in this little gossip about literary society in England, which presents so many new phases and distinct customs since the days of the sketch I first referred to that the picture in *Punch* has no longer any meaning.

All social life is based on precedent and tradition, and for this reason, doubtless, the present enjoyable condition of things exists in the literary world in England, where precedents have an intrinsic value and traditions are held in such high esteem.

If I were asked what seemed to me the standards of literary, artistic, or, let us say,—understanding the term in its cultured sense,—Bohemian society in England, I think I should answer, the first impression was of a necessity for procuring the utmost life could offer in the passing hour; next the free-masonry of real talent or sympathy; and, finally, a comprehension that *abandon*—or a certain disregard for what the Philistine calls conventionality—has not the remotest approximation to laxity or impropriety. Individuality is held high; personality is respected; temperament is dealt with pleasantly; but all of these elements are permitted their own freedom on a very clear understanding—tacit, perhaps, but universal—that they involve no breach of Christian decorum or good breeding. Appreciating all this, the cultured modern Bohemian in England certainly enjoys existence to the utmost,—tastes

the fine flavor of whatever life affords,—has his possible hypercriticisms balanced by the wide horizon offered him,—finds that he may have a “genre” without growing narrow.

I think it is twelve years since the fact that certain social centres in London were beginning to be prominent became interesting to many pilgrims from this side of the water. At some houses in that day I recall informal gatherings which contained many elements since developed with more or less artistic finish in their surroundings,—possibly as well a wider outlook upon those so-called Bohemian necessities of life. They “went in” for something in particular, as a rule,—music, art, poetry, the drama,—but the result was a charming infusion of “feeling” for many things in life which perhaps had been overlooked or constrained by the conventionalities of the outer world, to which as well as to the inner circles these people belonged. There was very little posing. True, the artistic or æsthetic style of dress was even more pronounced than now, because perhaps neither Lazenby Liberty nor Burnett nor a host of artistic warehouses were known, and perhaps because, like all innovations, it was seized upon at first too radically for every-day employment. But there was nothing lackadaisical or overdrawn in the companies I recall with great delight in the England of 1875. We young people had of course a passion for literary lions, but were amazed to find that they never roared. Perhaps it is the very absence of the lionizing element which made social London then as well as now so agreeable. The great ones were recognized, of course, were deferred to, and were naturally enough sought, but there was not the least suspicion that they were on exhibition in any way or expected to do more than enjoy themselves. In the rare exceptions which proved this rule, the most agreeable *habitués* of any centre drifted away, cheap Bohemia naturally enough glided in, and there was an end of it all so far as the right kind of success for the over-zealous hostess was concerned. But in this way were formed small cliques which may be to this day feeble imitations or shadows of the larger circles.

I might name a dozen houses in those first days of my London life where these regular social gatherings of genuine delight were held; but in some instances the sound of certain voices, footsteps, the light of some faces, are no more. Sad gaps in that old-time circle make memory painful; yet this was the period which undoubtedly ushered in the present enjoyable era in society. The men and women who were fledglings then have since found the strength of their wings, and in turn are the recognized leaders, hosts, and hostesses of the day. We used to go to one house, I remember, not far from the river, and in the Chelsea neighborhood. Around a delightfully hospitable board a company of young

people were wont to gather who were just then beginning to do something in the world. It was a house where the large family were divided in their tastes and pursuits, so that there were talks about art, literature, and the drama,—wholesome talks, light-hearted and encouraging. The enthusiasms were well founded, the ambitions never poor, and even in the light of racier experiences I still am sure that the wit and fun were fairly good. There was a studio in that house, long and roomy, with strong contrasts of light and shadow, with a piano, and a window worthy of the name, and the fair daughter of the house used to wear the new sort of æsthetic dress adorably. Irving, then filling the Lyceum night after night in "The Bells" or "Charles the First," was an idol among the younger members of that family who have since distinguished themselves on the stage. At that time there was a piquant flavor of the dreadful, a mystery impossible to define in words, about any idea of taking up "The Profession;" and I sometimes wonder whether the young man who used to scarcely dare whisper his ambitions remembers that time of young delights when he is brought before the curtain so often nowadays to bow his acknowledgments to an enthusiastic "house." There was always an informal supper-party about ten o'clock. It was a wandering feast, and never over before time to expect some one from the theatres,—from the audience, or possibly from the "scene" itself. And then there would be talked of how this or that had been done,—who had been seen, who heard from; the current of events since a last meeting seemed naturally to drift by, each speaker contributing his share, and, as it seemed to us, the crudities of life could be forgotten. Real things, worthy subjects, were talked of, pleasant merry suggestions were made, and all in a manner so spontaneous that it was often hard later to remember more than the general atmosphere diffused. Sometimes from these gatherings there would be an impromptu adjournment to the House of Commons, if it so chanced that a lucky being was present possessed of tickets and in case something special was under debate, or it might be that under the midnight stars some young Americans in the party would drive away into Mayfair to a ball or a dance, where if the feeling was as entirely English it was a trifle chilling after the experiences of an hour ago. Yet the fragrance of the flowers in an English ball-room, the well-bred sights and sounds, come back agreeably as I write, and the very conventionalities take on a charm entirely their own. Mayfair in those days was just beginning to reach the dividing-line with what it called Bohemia, and the debatable ground between the two was being cordially bridged over. The figures I recall most vividly are those of Carlyle, Herbert Spencer, Gladstone, Disraeli, and the Shah of Persia. Carlyle we saw but once,

and then by chance. He was pacing up and down a railway-station, waiting for a train,—a tall figure, with closely-folded arms, a great-coat whose collar came high, a head down-bent, and a face seen but in a passing glimpse yet not to be forgotten. Sorrowful, or disenchanted,—that seemed to me the philosopher's expression, although it might have been against his own better nature. Every one, I fancy, recognized him, yet no one spoke. Perhaps because of this I always feel impressed by an idea of him as a solitary being capable enough of that relentless cry of his, "Man, man!" and his persistent "Wherefore?" which enshrouded even his beliefs.

One evening after a charming dinner I remember finding myself near a gentleman with a clearly-cut intellectual face, dark hair, expressive eyes, and a very friendly manner. He said something about a flower that I was admiring in a vase near by : a pleasant talk followed, very easy and unrestrained, and only when he had left the room did I understand that it was Herbert Spencer, then talked of not only for his writings, but also for his supposed guardianship of George Eliot. Gladstone and Disraeli I remember first most impressively in a debate at the "House" which brought out all the prominent characteristics of each. Gladstone was like some giant who abhorred restraining his power, Disraeli calm, cutting, and immovable. Their speeches were specimens of their individual style, even then Gladstone showing his interest keenly in the Irish question, Disraeli his never-disguised contempt for anything connected with the island or her brave people. Two hours after this debate was over we were whirling away in the direction of a ball-room where the Shah of Persia was expected as a guest. This glittering monarch seemed to absorb London at the time like some creature out of the "Arabian Nights." He and his retinue flavored highly of the spectacular ; but a deeper charm lay in their being real. It was queer and incongruous, but nevertheless true, that nineteenth-century English and American people were really gazing upon a potentate who retained many of the customs of those enchanted days of yore, who went about dressed like Haroun-al-Raschid, whose civilization was entirely Oriental, and who walked through London society as though he had stepped out of some strange tale hundreds of years old. We took our places where we could see the royal guests as they entered from a door-way at the lower end of the ball-room. It might be interesting to state that at any entertainment the hour for such an arrival is fixed, and when royalty appear the host and hostess of the evening have to meet them and conduct them into the rooms. There was a little stir, a moving back, and some additional crashing strains from the band, and, behold, there appeared a man of magnificent although sullen demeanor, fairly ablaze with jewels, the



colors of his dress rich reds and blues, his whole appearance seeming for the moment to dwarf everything about him. Later we observed how peculiarly unpleasant were his expression and manner. He had a sort of animal good looks, but was coarse, swarthy, and almost rough; in fact, it seemed apparent that his boorishness was merely restrained by the sense that something unusual was demanded of him. There was a great crush that night, and perhaps the evening would not have been worth anything but for an introduction which I shall remember gratefully all my life. We had been talking in a little group about the Shah, when some one pressed forward; then a small elderly gentleman was seen speaking to one of our party,—a man with a thin, pleasant face, dark hair, spectacles, and, in some way hard to define, having the look of a musician. A moment later, and an introduction was gone through. It was Sir Julius Benedict, the prototype of Charles Auchester, the friend of Mendelssohn, the pupil of old Zelter, who in turn had been taught by Haydn, whose piano he owned, and on which Sir Julius as a child had played his first finger-exercises. Remembering the few times in my life that I met him, I can only recall of Sir Julius the pleasantest and most friendly intercourse. He was always kind, always genial, always ready and willing to show a courtesy; and when one remembers how wide the span of his career, it seems wonderful that we who live to-day should have had any social association with him.

When I returned to England a few years later, this brilliant beginning for Bohemia seemed to have drawn together all its forces. It was systematized and its precedents established. It was perhaps a case of the survival of the fittest, but at all events people of genius and those who despised stupid conventionalities had taken their proper place, and London presented a circle which was in its way charming, the talismans being all fascinating, all alluring, since they combined so much, their glow was so real, their meaning so intrinsically worth knowing. There was a large circle, of course, and in and about this there were—and are—cliques. There are certain sets who form special meetings, who go here and there together, who exchange small mutual sympathies sure of immediate recognition, and who furnish the friction and the stimulus which all people who really live their lives need, but these constantly mingle with the larger radius, and the interests are so much in common that a man may go from one end of Kensington, let us say, to parts of the Strand,—from house to house,—and find that he can talk intelligently on the same topic in every place sure of quick response and understanding. Every one is interested in the doings of the day among their own especial set or in the larger circle, but shallow gossip, which might touch it all were life less varied and ambitions less high, is rarely known. I

think it is as though while the flowing of the small streams and their eddies excite constant interest, one never loses sight of the fact that all tend towards a great ocean. If there are trifles thought of or cherished, they are the trifles that belong to wide horizons, large designs.

Nearly all the people whose methods of life we are discussing live in Kensington, Chelsea, or the neighborhood of Hampstead Heath, some few having colonized at Bedford Park. Kensington is the neighborhood *par excellence* for the English artist. West House, the delightful and, I may say, famous residence of George Boughton, A.R.A., stands on Camden Hill. Melbury Road is dignified by the fine houses of Sir Frederick Leighton, most genial of all Academy Presidents, G. F. Watts, Fildes, etc. It is a street whose architecture is throughout delightful. The houses are detached, and are large red brick or stone mansions, irregular in design, but each characteristic of the owner. One of these stands back in a charming garden. Another is in a curve of the road which presents something so rural in its aspect that sauntering down there very early one summer morning it was almost hard to believe that by a few short steps a busy High Street would come in view. Bedford Gardens is also deeply associated with painters of to-day and with social doings that have all the fascination of cultured Bohemia. The houses are not large, but are charmingly adapted to bachelors' quarters. There is a snug little "home" portion in front; a long glass-covered passage-way leads to the studios, some of which, like that of Alfred Parsons, the landscape-painter and well-known illustrator,—the "Burr" of the Tile Club,—are well known to the American associates of that most hospitable clique, and show designs and finish which would dissipate at once the old idea that the artist is any longer on debatable social ground. Other studios at Hampstead—like that of George Du Maurier—are equally charming. Mr. Du Maurier's is almost startling in its suggestions of the materials for his best-known sketches. His work is of so cheerful a character that the place seems full of friendly good will and a happily-conducted hospitality. His models used to be, and I believe are still, a married couple who adapt themselves surprisingly to all sorts of characters; but the artist certainly finds his field in the society which knows him and likes him so well. Of an evening he may be seen, agreeable and speculative in gaze, in some drawing-room whose groups present innumerable subjects for forthcoming numbers of *Punch*; and, as he is never ill-natured to any of his friends, he is as readily to be forgiven for his graceful reproductions of the people in his world as Mr. Howells or Mr. Henry James. Perhaps Du Maurier and his work illustrate better than anything I could hope to say the precise stability of Bohemia to-day.

Bohemia has a winter season now in London as well as the conventional spring and summer one. By January many hospitable doors are open, the studios are to be seen, and, in spite of weather that often defies the most industrious nature, brushes are busy, sketches are being worked up, and the afternoons and evenings are agreeably social, the one complaint to be made being of the embarrassment of riches. How to do it all, to go everywhere, to hear everything, to live out all that this varied and fascinating existence offers! I used to think that the dark days helped along a certain friendly feeling. They promoted a sense that no one need expect to work after a certain hour, and friends would gather informally in this studio or that drawing-room, when the best of everything was talked about, good music was played, new songs were sung, and criticism and good-humored banter were indulged in freely. Sometimes half a dozen well-known musicians would meet together unexpectedly at some house where the afternoon was the hostess's special one at home. What mattered it if the sky held certain yellow lights? Was there not a glowing hearth within, a comfortable round tea-table drawn into the glow, the constant coming and going of interesting people, the bits of music played or sung by masters of the art, always something worth hearing or seeing or remembering after the hour had passed? I recall one November day when the weather contained a challenge almost to one's moral principle, and yet what an afternoon we spent at Mrs. Thackeray-Ritchie's! It was at her quaint house in Young Street, Kensington,—the Old Street of her delightful novel,—and there had met together quite informally a company who had as many interests in common as they had distinct individualities. There was Richard—or, as he loved to be known, Dicky—Doyle, the illustrator of *Punch*, who designed its well-known title-page, as honest and agreeable a gentleman as ever held a pencil or entered a drawing-room,—a round-faced, smiling, elderly man, with good humor and kindness in every tone of his voice. He showed me several sketches hanging on the wall which belonged to the early editions of Thackeray, and also certain pictures of the house and island where Miss Thackeray wrote her best short story, "From an Island;" and he talked enchantingly about the time when he was first on *Punch*, when Mark Lemon was young, when Dickens was known as "Boz," and when they had a clique as genial and enjoyable as this more æsthetic modern one. Lady Martin was there that day, the Helen Faucit who held London audiences spell-bound twenty years ago,—a tall, majestic-looking woman, who entertained us by an account of some private theatricals in which she had recently been called upon to take a part, and which tried her severely, but her kindness of heart led her to ap-

preciate the fact that her name went far to assist the charity. There also was Thackeray's old boon companion Admiral Follett-Synge, between whom and the great novelist was an amusing standing joke. Admiral Synge had written some charming nursery rhymes for the little Thackerays and his own children, and was known to be quick at brilliant repartee in verse. How ever it was started no one knew, but there came about a general understanding that whenever or wherever the two men encountered each other the one was to say a line of something ridiculous to which the other should promptly reply in rhyme. Of course it became the object of each to get off the first line; and it can easily be imagined what amusement this occasioned both to the perpetrators and to the by-standers who were in the joke. Admiral Synge declared that sometimes his wits would desert him in the most paralyzing manner when he espied Thackeray's great figure looming in the distance. Some of these rhymes were so good as to have been preserved; and even after the local or family events which had prompted them were forgotten they were worth reading, in a portfolio or album where they were kept. If not on that afternoon, it was upon another in the same season that at the house of a well-known musician I was much impressed by the appearance of a lady who, seated in a window near the piano, seemed to be a special guest. Three or four notable people in the company stood about talking to her with a certain deference in their manner tinged with alert interest in what she was saying. A large woman, with a strong rugged face, she was not, to my thinking, absolutely plain, for the eyes held an unconquerable charm; yet I remember thinking in that very first glance at her that there was the most peculiar and passionate look of melancholy about them, almost as though they had once somewhere, somehow, gazed into the very depths of all that could be sad, and coming back again to brighter things had brought a look no joyousness of earth could ever take away. A little later it so chanced that some mutual sympathy about the music that was being played led us into conversation. Her voice was exquisitely musical, her manner very pleasant, her way of speaking, if a trifle precise, very eloquent. I was wondering who she could be, and, since introductions are rarely necessary, I might have gone on talking all the afternoon without being aware of my companion's celebrity, had not a pretty girl who was one of the Princess of Wales's household, and who sat just behind me, leaned forward to whisper, "Do you know that is George Eliot?" Mr. Lewes presently approached to talk to the young lady I have mentioned, and we were soon all conversing in a sociable group. Mr. Lewes I remember was peculiarly brilliant on that occasion; but, although I never met him again, I believe that his

conversational ability was considered by all who knew him as peculiarly sparkling and epigrammatic. This was not very long before his death, and the day after that event I remember passing by the house on North Bank where George Eliot lived, and where for so many years she held brilliant receptions Sunday afternoons, but to which many people in London society who would have enjoyed knowing her objected to going, since they could not accept the standard she had set up for herself. The house seemed shrouded in gloom. A large dwelling it was, set in one of those gardens which abound even in the heart of London and give so much picturesque effect even in the wintry season.

At all afternoon teas or at homes which vary the winter season the guests arrive at any hour between three or four and seven o'clock. They come in ordinary calling-costume, and are easy to entertain, because they understand so well what to expect and what is expected of them. I believe the first impression upon an American mind would be that of an absence of any straining after effect. It is all simple and natural and easy. If the tea be in a studio there is sure to be some good music and some good art talk, for the artist is a worker who is fond of discussing his work with his neighbor, and what this one or that has done is canvassed eagerly, critically, unsparingly perhaps, but, so far as I have ever known, with the most sincerely kindly feeling. The music on such occasions is apt to be from professionals, who lend their services readily enough since they are all friends together. Sometimes it happens that an aspirant for the concert-room is brought out on such an occasion, the system of private hearings of the kind being very distinctively English. To sing in such a company is indeed to secure a verdict which will likely be repeated by the audiences which the singer confronts for the first time, let us say, in St. James's Hall, since the concerts at that favorite place of amusement are patronized almost *en masse* by this light-hearted Bohemia of which we are speaking. Presentation-nights of a play at the popular theatres assemble the same set; and I question whether any entertainment can be more agreeable. The spectacle of the house is usually a very fine one, the regulation evening dress being in force, and the boxes presenting always a suggestion of luxury which I have heard professionals say was particularly encouraging, stimulating them if it were a comedy of the day to their most approved style, and giving them the feeling that the drawing-room interiors presented to the audience were in harmony with what they had themselves quitted. It is almost surprising since Bohemia has mingled with Mayfair that the illusion of these purely society plays can remain. Mr. Irving or Mr. Barrett, Mrs. Kendal or Miss Anderson, are discussed precisely as though they were not in character but themselves, and the transition



seems very slight from the theatre to any of the supper-parties which follow, where the actor or actress is congratulated on his or her success as though the whole affair were purely social.

Everything, of course, is so late in England that many a supper-party breaks up only to drift away to some larger entertainment. Such clubs as the people we are discussing belong to hold high revel of their kind until the small hours of the morning. No wonder that few people even among those who work hard are to be seen or heard from before ten in the morning,—a fact which reduces the working-day to a very few hours. It is surprising that so much in the way of literature and art can be accomplished; it is not at all surprising that when the time for sending in pictures to the Grosvenor or the Royal Academy is approaching,—when what is known as “Show Sunday” is at hand, the day when nearly every studio in London is open for visitors,—there is a general atmosphere of rush and haste, models are in perpetual demand, brushes that have been carelessly idle a few weeks before begin to fly, and preoccupation sits brooding on the brow of the most jovial of the brotherhood. Then is the time when invitations to dinner must be despatched with care,—when it is hard to bring together people whose brilliancy can be relied upon. Harrowing thoughts possibly of the hanging committee, of varnishing day, and of private views take the place of the charming *abandon* which characterized our friends earlier in the season, and the question of frames becomes a vital topic. As every one is interested in everybody else, this atmosphere of anxiety penetrates even into the drawing-rooms of those whom I have ventured to characterize as the sympathizers in the working set.

The well-known models are a feature in life at this period. They enter keenly into the spirit of their employers' work, and feel a pride in the success of their pictures which is very evident as the day for sending in draws near. And if there chance to be an Academy election, then is the model in his hour of joy! By an old-established custom, the man who brings the news to an artist that the magic R.A. or A.R.A. may be written after his name is sure of a large fee; and accordingly many excited individuals are to be found in the neighborhood of the place of ballot, each trying to outreach the other and be first with the intelligence. When George Boughton, kindest and most popular of artists, was “up” for election as an associate, the scene about Burlington House one evening was most exciting. Mr. Boughton chanced to be dining out. Suddenly there was heard in the hall of his host's house a perfect clamor for admittance to the dining-room, and, the door being flung open, there rushed in a well-known model, fairly panting from his race, to shout out the news first that the A.R.A.

was elected ! Hot upon his heels came another ; but the first man gloriously detailed how he had kept a cab by the hour in waiting, how he had dashed by any and every short cut, and, behold, he had won what the models themselves regard as their laurels on the occasion. This class of humbler workers in Bohemia live curiously apart from one another : they have no cliques, no sense of brotherhood, but all are known equally to the leading artists, and some are so permanently engaged that there is danger of resulting mannerism in the painter's work. They absorb a certain sense of what, to quote from the light-hearted vocabulary of Bohemia, is called "savaïs." They know how to wear a costume, how to pose for a certain picture, and all this without in the least caring for its motive. The costume-makers are by far more artistically intelligent. In these days of realistic work, of regard for technical details and fear of anachronism, the utmost care is given to reproducing the costume of a period in every minute detail. The artist who has a feeling for the truth of all this will go far to study an original costume, and will count the purchase of such a one as a stroke of luck well worth communicating to his brethren. A great many informal but most agreeable luncheons are given during this critical period, when the pictures in progress are talked over ; and, since an artist nearly always has his studio in his own house, there are opportunities for adjourning to look at the works on the easels, and to listen perhaps to the painter's desolate expressions when he feels particularly blue or to his enthusiasm when the key-note of his mood is distinctly major. Just before the pictures are sent in, receptions to the intimate friends of the painter are given ; and to stay away from these private views would be unthought of. The occasion is one which calls for all the ingenuity of the painter, and, it may be, of his wife and family, in decorating the rooms ; and if after a series of such "at homes" one goes away with a confused sense of color, pleasant sights and sounds, friendly faces and voices, flowers and music, there is at least an agreeable impression of having been most enjoyably and profitably entertained in the world of art. "Show Sunday" is more public. Almost any one by presenting a visiting-card may go through the well-known studios, even Sir Frederick Leighton, Alma Tadema, Burne Jones, and others of their rank opening their doors to the "sesame" of a very casual introduction. The banquet at the Royal Academy which inaugurates its annual opening is a very splendid and formal affair, dominated by the President and the royal princes, dignified by the presence of all the most distinguished people in the land, and certainly giving a character peculiarly its own to the exhibition which follows. The private views which usher in the season of picture-exhibiting at the Academy and the Grosvenor bring

together all the same set, the costumes of the ladies presenting a picture well worthy of Mr. Du Maurier's facile pencil ; but I question whether on this occasion the works of art are ever studied or appreciated by the glittering company who throng the rooms. I remember one occasion of the kind when a party of Americans seated on one of the circular benches amused themselves for an hour counting up the notabilities present and in fancy distributing them throughout the United States, assigning a group consisting of Browning, George Eliot, and Mr. Tom Hughes to Cleveland, Ohio, imagining the delight with which they would be welcomed, or how far they would go, as one vagrant-minded person in that happy coterie remarked, "to stock the city with literary enthusiasm." Whistler was going about that day, I remember, with a party of friends, studying some blue and gray and green canvases of his own, his keen quaint face and one white tuft of hair in the black as well worthy of study as any portrait on the wall, and Millais, tall and handsome, was talking to Alma Tadema near a wonderfully clever portrait by Gregory and Albert Moore. Alfred Hunt, who has been called the beloved of Ruskin, and charming Mrs. Morgan, whose pictures have been talked of since her girlhood, were in one of the door-ways, near some fascinating sketches by a member of the family who long ago in my remembrance made merry over their ambitions and enthusiasms in the old house in Chelsea. Young aspirants to fame and success in literature and art were numerous, and made one think how another decade might see them the leaders, dominating Bohemia as gracefully as did their elders on this occasion ; at present they contributed charming effects of youth and enthusiasm, freshness and originality, the girl in the blue gown and broad-brimmed hat with a face like some spring flower having already struck a fine note in poetry, the tall, keen-eyed young man who was talking to her being already welcomed in a band of leading reviewers, and the very young, almost childish little creature to whom a well-known landscape-painter was showing a picture of "October" being one of the joyously tuneful ones in the world of poetry and art.

Gradually approaching them comes William Black, dark-haired and dark-eyed, with the look of the modern man of letters about him, but he has to stop for half a dozen recognitions, hand-shakings, and, no doubt, much of the good-humored fun which these careless people are forever exchanging. Presently there is a drawing together of various harmonious elements, and a company of kindred spirits go off for the inevitable afternoon tea, Mr. Comyns Carr, the hospitable Secretary of the Gallery, leading the way to a special table in the restaurant below. Night falls on such a scene with a happy confusion of voices

and laughter, promises to meet again as we go out into the dusk, the destinations being various, but all likely to reproduce something of the same material for social enjoyment.

From the rush and whirl of the season which follows, from the fancy balls, the theatricals, the dinners, luncheons, and impromptu gatherings, there is, after all, a relief in the expeditions to the country, various congenial parties forming in an impromptu fashion which makes such little wanderings all the more agreeable. Surrey offers endless inducements to the artist or the worker in literature or the drama. There is a small inn not far from the town of Guilford, well known to Bohemia, and endorsed by Tennyson, who has had many friends stopping there, much to the worthy landlord's delight. It is private, decorous, but quaint, and one is sure of a capital dinner and the most obsequious service; and a few days in this region may include saunterings about a country whose charm is perennial, whose quiet is never monotonous, and whose varieties are of all the diversities in nature. From the river Wye how easy is it to reach on a summer's day the Thames, where nowadays many house-boats are to be seen, artists and their literary friends frequently combining in taking one of these floating dwellings for an idle, lazy, drifting week of lotus-eating! In Surrey, and in the country near the Avon as well, various members of the coterie we are discussing have set up some of their household gods and formed delightful out-of-town homes, to which in winter or in summer they can go for relief from the whirl of London life. Americans whose opinions are worth having declare that they find it now as easy to cross the ocean for a few weeks of work and holiday in the English country where such circles have been formed as to go to any resort at home, the advantages to the worker, whether on canvas or in print, being too many to need recapitulation. There is not, I am convinced, the slightest danger that transatlantic association can ever take from the American heart or principle that germ of something which must always remain loyal. The day has gone by, let us hope, when our failure to appreciate the advantage of being cosmopolitan stood in the light of our own advancement. Very few people would be willing now to admit to a prejudice against the opportunities which any country offered them in their work in life. Has it not also become an accepted fact that we ought to be willing to burn our candle wherever the game has been proved worthy of it, let it be in Boston or New York, Paris or London?

*Lucy C. Lillie.*

## THE MYSTERY OF CRO-A-TÁN.

AN AMERICAN BALLAD.

A.D. 1587.

[The first English colony was sent to America by Sir Walter Raleigh, under the auspices of Sir Richard Grenville. The settlement was made on Roanoke Island, in Albemarle Sound.]

## I.

THE home-bound ships stood out to sea,  
And on the island's marge  
Sir Richard waited restlessly,  
To step into the barge.

"The governor tarrieth long," he chode,  
"As he were loath to go :  
With food before and want behind,  
There should be haste, I trow."

Even as he spake, the governor came :  
"Nay, fret not, for the men  
Have held me back with frantic let,  
To have them home again.

"The women weep : 'Ay, ay, the ships  
Will come again' (he saith)  
'Before the May.—Before the May  
We shall have starved to death !'

"I've sworn return, by God's dear leave,  
I've vowed by court and crown,  
Nor yet appeased them. Comrade, thou  
Mayhap canst soothe them down."

Sir Richard loosed his helm, and stretched  
Impatient hands abroad.  
"Have ye no trust in man ?" he cried,  
"Have ye no faith in God ?



"Your governor goes, as needs he must,  
To bear, through royal grace,  
Hither such food-supply that want  
May never blench a face.

"Of freest choice ye willed to leave  
What so ye had of ease ;  
For neither stress of liege nor law  
Hath forced you over seas.

"Your governor leaves fair hostages  
As costliest pledge of care,—  
His daughter yonder, and her child,  
The child Virginia Dare.\*

"Come hither, little sweetheart. So !  
Thou'lt be the first, I ween,  
To bend the knee, and send through me  
Thy birthland's virgin fealty  
Unto its Virgin Queen.

"And now, good folk, for my commands :  
If ye are fain to roam  
Beyond this island's narrow bounds  
To seek elsewhere a home,

"Upon some pine-tree's smoothen trunk  
Score deep the Indian name  
Of tribe or village where ye haunt,  
That we may read the same.

"And if ye leave your haven here  
Through dire distress or loss,  
Cut deep within the wood above  
The symbol of the cross.

"And now on my good blade I swear,  
And seal it with this sign,

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\* Virginia Dare, the grand-daughter of Governor Whyte, was the first English child born in America.

That if the fleet that sails to-day  
Return not hither by the May,  
The fault shall not be mine !”

## II.

The breath of spring was on the sea :  
Anon the governor stepped  
His good ship's deck right merrily ;  
His promise had been kept.

“ See, see ! the coast-line comes in view !”  
He heard the mariners shout,—  
“ We'll drop our anchors in the sound  
Before a star is out !”

“ Now God be praised,” he inly breathed,  
“ Who saves from all that harms :  
The morrow morn my pretty ones  
Will rest within my arms !”

At dawn of day they moored their ships,  
And dared the breakers' roar.  
—What meant it ? Not a man was there  
To welcome them ashore !

They sprang to find the cabins rude ;  
The quick green sedge had thrown  
Its knotted web o'er every door  
And climbed each chimney-stone.

The spring was choked with winter's leaves,  
And feebly gurgled on ;  
And from the pathway, strewn with wrack,  
All trace of feet was gone.

Their fingers thrid the matted grass,  
If there perchance a mound  
Unseen might heave the broken turf ;  
But not a grave was found.

They beat the tangled cypress swamp,  
If haply in despair  
They might have strayed into its glade,  
But found no vestige there.

"The pine! the pine!" the governor groaned;  
And there each staring man  
Read, in a maze, one single word  
Deep carven,—CRO-A-TÁN!

But cut above, no cross, no sign,  
No symbol of distress;  
Naught else beside that mystic line,  
Within the wilderness!

And where and what was "Cro-a-tán"?  
But not an answer came,  
And none of all who read it there  
Had ever heard the name!

The governor drew his jerkin sleeve  
Across his misty eyes:  
"Some land, maybe, of savagerie  
Beyond the coast that lies.

"And skulking there the wily foe  
In ambush may have lain:  
God's mercy! Could such sweetest heads  
Lie scalped among the slain?

"Oh, daughter! daughter! with the thought  
My harrowed brain is wild!—  
Up with the anchors! I must find  
The mother and the child!"

They scoured the mainland near and far;  
The search no tidings brought,  
Till, 'mid a forest's dusky tribe,  
They heard the name they sought.

The kindly natives came with gifts  
Of corn and slaughtered deer:

What room for savage treachery  
Or foul suspicion here?

Unhindered of a chief or brave,  
They searched the wigwams through,  
But neither lance, nor helm, nor spear,  
Nor shred of child's nor woman's gear,  
Could furnish forth a clue.

How could a hundred souls be caught  
Straight out of life, nor find  
Device through which to mark their fate  
Or leave some hint behind?

Had winter's ocean inland rolled  
An eagle's deadly spray  
That overwhelmed the island's breadth  
And swept them all away?

In vain, in vain, their heart-sick search :  
No tidings reached them more,  
No record save that silent word  
Upon that silent shore.

The mystery rests a mystery still,  
Unsolved of mortal man :  
Sphinx-like, untold, the ages hold  
The tale of CRO-A-TAN.

*Margaret J. Preston.*

## MY LADY'S-MAID.

[Discussions of the problems of domestic service have occupied public attention more than usual this winter. The following narrative offers no solution, but illustrates a difficulty which employers meet at the outset,—the total absence of comprehension on the part of the employed both of the duties they undertake and the obligation assumed in undertaking them. It also throws some light on the moral attitude of most young women unused to service when they apply for a situation. Every word set down here is sad fact, copied from diaries and letters written at the time to which they refer. The documents quoted are genuine. Nothing has been altered except proper names.]

I HAVE had more than one maid. I may have had a score. There was but one of them worthy of notoriety, and she had a passion for it which cannot fail to be gratified should she fall in with a chapter of her biography in print. To make her story intelligible I must begin by giving a few particulars about myself. I live half a mile from a railway-station, at a pretty, old-fashioned country place, six miles from Mediotropolis, one of the largest cities in the Atlantic States. My husband's surname, which has been known and respected both in town and in our country neighborhood since ante-Revolutionary times, is almost identical with one that has been made familiar to the public by nearly a century's puffing,—let us call it Roland. Living at this distance from town, after trying various ways of finding servants, I have learned that the best chance of securing good ones is either to advertise, or answer by letter the most promising advertisements, in a daily newspaper of good standing. To give force to what follows, I must quote my habitual formula in advertising, which varies only as to the post to be filled:

"Wanted.—A lady's-maid, white, Protestant. Reference required from private families in Mediotropolis with whom she has lived in that capacity. Address: Mrs. Oliver Roland, Rolandseck, Shadewell P.O."

To the advertiser, if a lady's-maid for instance, I write,—

"If the advertiser is a Protestant, good seamstress, able to cut and fit plain dresses and dress hair, and can refer to private families in or near Mediotropolis with whom she has lived as lady's-maid, Mrs. Oliver Roland would like to see her" (the date given). "She can take the 10 A.M. train to Shadewell Station, where a wagon will meet her. Her fare to and from town will be paid whether she is engaged or not, if she can give the required references, without which she need not call."

This seems explicit, yet when the answers come the writer as often



as not is a telegraph-operator, a shoe-binder, a photograph-mounter, a "shop-lady," or something else that has nothing to do with domestic service, although maids-of-all-work now and then apply. Here are three samples of the replies. The first is in a fine, flourishing hand, with great contrast of light up-strokes and heavy down-strokes :

"MRS. OLIVER ROLAND. Seeing your advertisement in this mornings Paper thought I would write you in Regard to it. being a young lady whos Parents are not residing in this City, consequently would like very much to have such Position. My Parents having resided in this untill a few years ago. My Nativity is of this City and can give Mrs. Roland any amount of Reference desirable, although I am a Catholic and never hired out before. Also have brothers & Relitives. Should this meet with your approbation, would be pleased to Receive a Reply at an early Period.

"Respectfully,

"MISS BIDDY O'BRIEN."

The second is an almost illegible scrawl, with traces of German current-hand :

"MRS. OLIVER ROLAND. As I am no profeshional hair-dresser I thought I would not suit you, for I never lived out before, though as I was at New Margate Hotel one week taking charge of an Infant I thought the position of Ladies maid would be very suitable, as I seen them taking care of their Ladies when they go out, do plain-sewing and attend to their correspondence, but I never seen them in the Kitchen or Laundry, this would not suit me. otherwise if you wish to try me for a week or tow you Please go for references to Mrs. Fritz Schmitt, keeper of the New Margate Hotel, no doubt you know her, as the family is from Mediotropolis.

"Respt. yours,

"LUISE MULLER."

The last is clearly written in a hand such as one sees in washing-lists and bills from small shops in England,—in fact, the regular English lady's-maid's text :

"MADAM. I received your note and write to inform you that I am not a girl just landed in the country, but have been here 5 or 6 years, and a young lady would not want to drive along a country road with a strange man unless she was green and not used to the country. I could furnish good references, but consider them far too good to trouble myself to bring to your house by the way you worded your note. You may not have meant to have written it in that style, but any one that calls herself a Lady would write different. I have got a good place and so will decline your very kind offer.

"CARRIE PIKE, an *English Lady*."

I suspect that I had already been in communication with this damsel under another name, and had found her references unsatis-

factory, although they purported to be from Englishwomen of rank, the paper of all bearing the engraved address of a country-seat or house in London, with monogram and coronet. Even the handwriting was in order, being the helter-skelter, highty-tighty script now in fashion with that class, but there were slips of style, and I had declined to believe that an English countess would begin a note in the third person, lapse into the first, and sign it with her title.

Another applicant takes a higher position :

"MRS. ROLAND. Pardon my audacity. If you wish a good lady's maid or companion I would be pleased to hear from you. I am a young lady of a high standing family and can give you the best references. In haste.

"Sincerely,

"MISS ELLA SWANK.

"P.S. Address,

"No postal cards,

"No. 1646 Blank St., Mediotropolis."

The most extraordinary budget of notes I ever received was in answer to an advertisement I once published when about to go to Europe, for a lady's-maid who should be "a good sailor, accustomed to foreign travel, and able to refer to ladies with whom she has gone abroad in that capacity," adding, "No others need apply." Answers poured in by the dozen, most of them saying in the first place that the writer had never been at sea, and secondly that she had never been at service. They would have made a curious collection, but after laughing at them I grew cross at having so many impertinent applications to answer, for I follow the great Duke of Wellington's rule to answer all letters, and threw them into the waste-paper basket. My replies were curt, and I thought conclusive, yet the return of post brought several rejoinders, of which I still have a few. The first was from an English girl who had already been to see me :

"MADAME,—I must apologise to you for troubling you a second time, but I think that after all you may possibly change your mind and give me a single trial, if it be only for a week. Although sick in crossing when I come to the States, I do not think I should be sick going home. You can train me up in your ways, and to do things exactly as you wish. I think it would be a pleasure to wait on you, as I can see that you are a perfect lady, and I have seen very few such since I came to this country.

"I remain your obedient servant,

"MARY ANN THOMPSON."

2. "MADAM. Although, as you say, you thought me too old when I lived with you once before for a month, you were so kind to me then that I would like to go back to you. I only want you to take me as far as Liverpool, and then you

could send me away, as I have come into a fortune in Wales and want to get back to Carnarvon and claim it.

"Your humble servant,

"JANE EVANS."

3. "Received your answer this morning. Excuse me for troubling you, but I would not feel justified in calling. Still, I am sorry to give up the place as I know it would be a pleasant one. I have never lived out in any family and have never crossed the ocean. Have no doubt you will feel surprised at my answering again, but feel sure I will be capable, as I am quick to learn. As to crossing the ocean, although I have never been myself I have friends that have been, and from what they tell me it would be a pleasure more than anything else. In my disposition I am quiet and retired, but I suppose you would have no objection to me on that account. I can, of course, give you no reference as lady's-maid, but feel sure I could do all that would be required of me, but can give good reference as to character.

"Respectfully,

"MISS L. M. BROWN."

4. "MRS. OLIVER ROLAND. Saw your advertisement and thought I would answer it. It is true I never lived out as lady's-maid or in any other position, but I am smart and can do anything I try, and would be willing to make myself agreeable, for I should enjoy a trip to Europe. I never was at sea, but have lived near it, and I dearly love the glorious ocean. Besides, I have been rowing on a pond at a picnic and I was not a bit sick.

"Please call or address

"MISS MAGGIE G——."

The common characteristics of these notes were the statement of the writer that it was her long-cherished wish to go to Europe, and the conviction that she could do anything she tried. They were often touching in their ignorance and expectations of life. Sometimes there was a still more moving appeal,—a young woman out of work, unable to find anything to do, willing to do anything to earn an honest livelihood. Experience oft repeated had taught me the hopelessness of trying to train such as these to domestic service; so if I could help them in no other way I avoided seeing them, to save mutual pain. In spite of precautions and prohibitory clauses in answer to applicants, it is impossible always to escape unpleasant interviews. A highly-respectable elderly woman once called upon me wearing a black silk dress and velvet bonnet and an India shawl. She said she had never lived out, no, but had kept servants herself and knew how things ought to be done; she had not kept a lady's-maid, no, but she knew what she required herself and could do it for another.

"But you *cannot* know what I require, and I do not wish to have to teach you."

"I'm fully your equal, ma'am, in all but worldly possessions."

"I do not wish for a servant who considers herself my equal."

"In what, pray, do you consider yourself my superior, ma'am?"

"Probably in education; but I think you had better go."

"I doubt it greatly, ma'am," she said, drawing herself up and draping herself in her shawl. "I've got intellectual gifts, and poetical gifts, and the Lord has added spiritual ones. You are not my superior in any respect."

"Very well, then I'm afraid we should clash. That will do. Good-morning."

"Clash? Clash is a low word, ma'am. *Ladies* do not clash. Good-morning, ma'am."

Another superior person sent in her name as Mrs. Smithson, one morning when I was expecting a visit on business, and I had her shown up to a hall where I was lying on a sofa, having sprained my foot. A dowdy, gray-haired woman, of rather disreputable appearance, in shabby weeds, came up-stairs, and, as I stared in surprise, seated herself near me and began at once:

"Good-morning. Mrs. Smithson,—Alice S., you know."

"Oh! the lady's-maid. But why did you not come yesterday, as you wrote you would do?"

"I *did* come, and waited half an hour at the station, but nobody come to meet me, as by promise, so I took the next train back to town. Nobody met me to-day, neither."

"But it is impossible, for I sent both yesterday and to-day, and the coachman said that nobody got out at Shadewell."

"Well, no; for yesterday I went to Wood Creek; the conductor said that was your station."

"You had the exact address in my note."

"Well, yes, but I'd left it at home."

"You did not go to Wood Creek again to-day, I suppose?"

"No, this morning I missed the train, so I come at noon, not to disappoint you, and walked from the station, and a long, hot walk it is."

I may as well own now, what the reader cannot fail to find out later, that I have a certain weakness of character which prevents my cutting short these visits at first. I am sorry for people, impudent though they may be, who are struggling to make a living decently; so I helplessly stretched out my hands to Mrs. Smithson, saying,—

"Let me see your references."

She produced two crumpled bits of paper from her pocket, but did not give them to me.

"They're not exactly what you asked for. I haven't filled just that

position. I was a lady myself once, worth fifty thousand dollars, but I come down in the world, so I have to support myself, and I've waited on sick ladies, and can do all any lady requires."

"Let me see them." One was a singular production in an illiterate hand, stating that Mrs. Smithson had lived three months with Mrs. Harmer as attendant and companion, giving entire satisfaction in all respects.

"Three months! That is a very short time. Who is Mrs. Harmer, and why did you leave her?"

"She's dead, that's why I left. She died."

"Who wrote the recommendation?"

"She wrote it before she died," replied Mrs. Smithson, in a tone that said plainly none but a fool would suppose it had been written afterwards.

"It will not do. What is the other?" The other read as follows:

"Mrs. A. Smithson nursed my mother, Mrs. Leffingwell, for six weeks before her death, and I write this at Mrs. Smithson's request to say that I know nothing detrimental of her.

"LUCY BROWNELL."

"What does this mean?"

"Why, Mrs. Leffingwell she died, and Mrs. Brownell,—her's the daughter,—she wrote me them lines. And I've waited on other ladies; but they all died, so I didn't get no reference from them."

"But this is not enough," I said, startled at the mortality attendant on Mrs. Smithson's ministrations, and anxious to get rid of her. "I will write to Mrs. Brownell for further particulars."

"You needn't do that, for she's moved to Columbus, Ohio, and I don't know her address."

"This will not answer. I wrote you that I required a maid who could do certain things, and references to say that she could do them, and your references say nothing about them."

"Anybody might know that whoever waits on a sick lady does what's needed,—dresses her hair, does her sewing, and attends to her regular. Mrs. Leffingwell expected me to do that, and I done it," retorted Mrs. Smithson, in a voice of defiance and aggression. She eyed me as I lay on the sofa, and, as my sprained ankle was not bandaged, she no doubt took me for an invalid and her predestined prey. "Besides," she resumed, "I'm pious, and whatever I have to do the Lord enables me to do."

"That will not answer," I repeated. "I wrote you that I required references saying that you could cut and fit a dress, among other things;



you can't give them to me, and there is no more to be said." I took out my purse, but she made no movement to rise; unluckily, I could not stir, and there was no bell within reach nor servant within call. Mrs. Smithson leaned back and looked round at the rather handsome hall, strewn with Eastern rugs and hung with pictures.

"Take in dresses?" she inquired.

"What?"

"D'you take in dresses, I said," she repeated, louder. "I s'pose anybody'd understand that."

"I don't understand you, but I see you are very ignorant and very impertinent, and I wish you to go away immediately." And I held out a half-dollar piece to her. She took it, turned it over in her hand, and asked, derisively,—

"What's this for?"

"For your railway-fare, although you are not entitled to it."

"My fare? *That* don't stand me for half what I've spent coming out here."

"It is twice as much as a return ticket costs."

"And where's the money for going to Wood Creek and back?"

"There it is: the fare is exactly the same as to Shadewell, and I have given you the price of two return tickets, though you are entitled to nothing. Now go, if you please."

"And my horse-car fare in town? I live near half a mile from the dépôt, and I don't walk for nobody. I took the horse-cars yesterday, and I took 'em to-day, and had to walk half a mile in the sun because you disappointed me twice, and I want my money."

Having no other resource, I lay back among my cushions and looked at her as one does when one has said one's last word. There was a silence.

"Are you a lady?" she asked, with a sneer. Another pause. "I expect you call yourself a lady," she said, forced to come to her own aid. "Well! *I'll* give you a fine character in the city, I promise you. Good-morning." She got up and began to go down-stairs. "I'm glad to have met you, anyways, but I shan't buy no more of the Macassar."

"The Macassar? The Macassar?" I mused to myself. By and by my husband came, and I told him the story. He burst into a shout of laughter.

"And thine incomparable oil, Macassar! Why, don't you see, my dear? *Rowland's* Macassar."

But these anecdotes are merely introductory: they may make the story of my lady's-maid sound less fabulous.

It was early in June in the year when a great international convention, let us say the Pan-Medical, met at Mediotropolis, and I expected to have a houseful of guests all summer. My Italian maid, who had been with me for years, was seized with homesickness, and declared she must go back to Rome. I found her a place with some friends who were going abroad, and advertised for a successor, with no result for some time except such notes and visits as the above. At length one day without previous communication there appeared a small, scraggy young woman in a white gown and wide hat, "come to answer the advertisement." She had not lived out in Mediotropolis, she didn't belong there, she came from a queenly Western city, she had never been in a regular situation, but she worked by the day, so she understood sewing in all its branches, and she could dress hair, make dresses, and iron muslins; she wanted the place so bad she had come right out without writing, and she had a letter from friends of hers in the city who she guessed I was acquainted with, and who had told her how to find Rolandseck. In conclusion she gave me a note from some estimable people whose name I knew, the family of a deceased clergyman who had been assistant at a church I once attended, attesting the bearer's good character and capability of doing all that she professed to do. I was not satisfied, and said so, and that moreover I had tried the experiment of training persons who had never been in service too often and had resolved never to renew it. She argued, urged, pleaded; only let her try, just give her a chance, she would come for nothing for a month to show whether she could not suit me. She was very much agitated; I stood firm for a time, but could not get rid of her,—I have already confessed to weakness of character. "We should only both of us be sorry," I said, and tried to explain to her how difficult and disagreeable she would find the subordinate position and the restraints which would meet her at every turn. Then she clasped her hands, burst into tears, and implored me to give her a trial; she told me that she was penniless, that she had come from the West with friends who were attending the Pan-Medical, and since reaching Mediotropolis she had heard of the failure of a bank in which she had put all her savings; she had not money enough to take her home, and was too proud to let her friends pay her way back. After a few days of despair she had set about trying to earn money enough to get home, and had attempted to do so in all sorts of ways without success. At last she resolved to go to service; she had seen my advertisement, her friends in town knew of me, and she had come, and would I not for pity's sake only try her? I knew that the Greenes, from whom she brought the letter, were unable to pay for her journey, the cost of which was not small: I could not bring

myself to refuse, and two days later, with the worst forebodings on my part, she entered my service.

Her name was Laura Janney ; she was twenty-two years old, scarcely five feet high, scrubby, sallow, with scanty black hair, eyes like brown shoe-buttons, irregular features, and thin, knotty fingers, but her teeth were beautiful, small, pearly, perfect, and the desire to show them produced a perpetual smile much at odds with a habitual scowl. The first morning as she was brushing my hair I was roused from my book by her dragging and mauling it unmercifully ; I looked up and saw that she was gazing at herself in the toilet-glass and paying no heed to what she was about.

"You are pulling my hair," I said. "Try and handle it more gently."

"My !" she exclaimed, trying to grasp my superabundant locks in both hands. "They won't go round it, they're so tiny."

"But you said you were accustomed to dressing hair."

"Oh, I've done it once in a while for my young friends for a frolic."

She talked the whole time while waiting upon me, and, seeing that she had no notion that there was any impropriety in doing so, I tried to open her eyes gently by monosyllabic replies or silence. The second morning she remarked, gayly,—

"I haven't seen Mr. Roland yet."

"Indeed ? Would you like to knock at his door and ask him to come out ?" She flushed, her eyes fell, and, scowling anew, she went on dressing me, and this checked her trick of talking. But I had not yet gauged her standard of qualification. The next day I gave her a chintz wrapper to cut out, with one I had worn as a guide ; she asked for a paper pattern to cut it by, but I had nothing of the sort.

"Of course I can't cut it without a paper pattern," she observed, in the tone of one who has been asked to do something unreasonable.

"Why, you told me you could make dresses."

"So I can ; I always make my own, but I don't wear 'em loose like that," pointing with scorn at the French *peignoir*, "and I always have one of Madame Demorest's patterns to cut by."

I took patience, had the wrapper cut out by a dress-maker, and turned it over to Laura to make up.

"Where's your sewing-machine, Mrs. Roland ?" she inquired, looking round my bedroom. "I don't see it in the sewing-room."

"I have none. I like hand-sewing, and never allow my work to be done by a machine."

"Oh, my ! I shall never get this job done without a machine."

"You told me you went out to sew by the day?"

"So I did, to run the machine. I can run Wheeler & Wilson, Howe, Singer, and Willcox & Gibbs. The ladies of Imperia City would not look at hand-made clothes."

The reader will have made up her mind by this time that I am either an angel or a fool. The first I certainly am not; as to the last there is a difference of opinion, and, not being sure myself, I leave others to decide. In the present case I was acting from conscience. I had engaged this little catamount, knowing much better than she could do how unfit she was for the position and how unlikely the experiment was to turn out well; I had gone into it with my eyes open and she had not; therefore I considered that it behooved me to bear with her and try whether nothing could be done with her. She was intelligent, and not idle at first, and I liked her pluck; people who do not know me well are apt to be afraid of me,—Mrs. Smithson was an exception,—but this girl did not fear the face of clay. I knew that unless she could find a place at some of the sewing-machine offices she would be in sore straits, and she had tried them unsuccessfully before coming to me. So I thought it my duty to try and get on with her and see if she would not learn something, as she was young. I did my best, and as kindly as I knew how, to teach her many things belonging to her place which she could not do, and to make her understand its obligations as a mere contract, but it was of no use. She had the entire want of order, system, punctuality, sense of propriety, and deference for age and authority common to our young people of all classes at the present day. She was filled with contempt for the East and conceit about the West, the glory of which she fancied that she reflected and represented. She had, besides, a bad temper, an antagonistic and aggressive disposition, and inscrutable ideas about dignity and independence; for instance, she would address me as Mrs. Roland until I was sick of the name, but nothing would induce her to say "ma'am," although she never refused to do so outright. There is no human relation in which her manners would not have been unfitting. In short, she was what is called a "cuss."

One day, about the end of the first week, she knocked at the door,—I had taught her to do that,—and, coming in with a letter in her hand, said she should like to speak to me. I nodded, supposing it was some question about her work; but she said,—

"I'll sit down, as the story is somewhat of a long one." Seating herself on the sofa and leaning her cheek on her hand, she began: "I've come to tell you, Mrs. Roland, who I am and why I'm here. A month ago I was engaged to be married to one of the first physi-

cians and finest gentlemen in Ioway. His mother is an aristocrat, and objected to the match on account of my working for my living. However, she invited me to come East on the party she and her son made up to visit Mediotropolis, as he wished to attend the Pan-Medical, and I accepted. She didn't treat me with respect, and after we reached here I got mad and we had a fight. I said I wouldn't stay with her any longer, and she said I shouldn't marry her son, and I said we'd see. So I went off to Greenes' for a few days, meaning to go home by myself, and then," here her face began to twitch, "came the news the bank had broke, and then,—and then," here the tears rained down in spite of herself, "he wrote to say he could not marry me in opposition to his mother's will, especially as times were so hard, and that he gave me back my promise, and hoped I would be happy and that we would always be friends. I wrote and told him that as he preferred his mother to me, of course he was free," and an angry spark in her eyes dried up the tears, "but I didn't think much of such friendship, and guessed we'd better be strangers. To-day I got a letter from Dr. Babcock,—that's his name,—which I want you to read, Mrs. Roland, and advise me what to do."

She gave me a sheet of blue-ruled letter-paper covered with a vulgar, florid handwriting; it was a love-letter in a style of cheap sentimentality, and, I thought, not quite an honest one. The writer lamented that fate should forbid their union, and that they had parted in anger, but his means did not warrant him in marrying; he feared a mother's curse; the thought that his lovely Laura was at service cut him to the soul; she a servant and among strangers! her dear little hands degraded by menial tasks! This must not be: she must come home to Imperia City and to her friends. He offered to lend her money for the journey, and begged her to reply immediately.

"What do you wish me to do?" I asked, as I gave this effusion back to her.

"I want you to advise me how to act."

"How did Dr. Babcock come to write to you? How did he know your address?"

"Well, I wrote to him after I engaged with you," she replied, reddening and looking down, "because I had promised to let him know what I was going to do."

"Oh! then you have continued to correspond with him after your engagement was broken off?"

"We have exchanged one or two letters."

"Do you think he has a right to ask you for more promises? Do you think he deserves anything further from you? Why did he ask



you to marry him if he could not support you? Why did he jilt you after he and his mother had recognized the engagement by bringing you on this journey, compromising you with their friends and your own? He has refused you his love and you have refused him your friendship; now on what terms do you stand? How can you accept money of any man who is not your near kinsman, especially of one who has treated you in such a way?"

"He only offered to loan it to me," she cried, hotly.

"And how long would you have to be in his debt? Suppose you should fall ill, and be unable to work for some time, how would you repay him?"

"I never meant to accept it. I only want to know what you would advise me to do about answering the letter. It is a very delicate position."

"It is a very simple position. Take no notice of it."

"I shouldn't wish to appear ungrateful for his interest. I only want to let him know I got the letter."

"Why should you do so? You owe him nothing. You have written to him already when you had better not have done it; if you answer this he will write again."

"I only just want him to know that I want neither him, nor his money, nor his letters," she retorted, angrily.

"He will know that if you don't answer."

"He might think the letter wasn't received," she persisted.

"Look here, Laura," I said. "You came to me for my advice, and I have given it to you. What you have told me does not in the least alter your position here. You said in the first place that you were anxious to find a situation because you had not the means to go home, and that is the gist of the story after all. If you stay with me and conduct yourself properly, in less than six months you will earn enough to pay your way back, and by that time you may like to stay with me, and I may be willing to keep you. It would be wiser for you not to go until you have got over your fancy for Dr. Babcock. He does not seem to me a man to be trusted. He has no business to offer you money, and it is nothing to be grateful for. If you are anxious that he should know you have got his letter, and do not wish to hear from him again, return it to him without a word, and that will answer it sufficiently. I have nothing more to say."

She got up and left the room cross and crestfallen. I should have taken a different tone if she had really come to me for counsel or sympathy, but from her first words I saw that she had done so only to give herself importance in my eyes.

I do not know what course she took, but incline to think that she let the correspondence drop, for she began to be listless, as if in want of some new excitement. She did not drop her airs of princess in disguise, however, and teaching her her work and her place seemed more hopeless every day. I began to sympathize with the dowager Mrs. Babcock, but I adopted the plan of taking no notice of her. My house was full of visitors, and my time was taken up with making arrangements for their attending the sessions of the Pan-Medical, or in showing them the lions of Mediotropolis and our lovely neighborhood, and with the labors of hospitality under the conditions which admit of such occurrences as I am relating. I seldom saw Miss Laura except when I dressed in the morning and evening, and then I was armed and fortified with a book. Although she was not a good needlewoman, she grew more expert in that and in other matters, and I hoped that we might wear on together until the autumn. But she had endless surprises in store. One day as I sat in a morning-room opening on the lawn behind the house an Italian fruit-peddler strolled away from the shrubbery of the kitchen precincts, probably sent off by the cook. In another moment a figure in white with floating hair tripped across the tennis-ground, hailed the Italian, and bought an orange, quietly proceeding to eat it, and throwing the peel about on the grass; it was Laura, who had attired herself in this mode after waiting on me. Another day I was putting flowers in water in the drawing-room at the front of the house, and I heard the sound of wheels on the carriage-drive, then a long and lively dialogue interrupted by laughter from a little terrace before the hall door. My husband and son had carried off our guests on expeditions after breakfast, and, though I had not expected them so soon, I supposed that some of the young people had come back. By and by I heard the wheels scratch on the gravel in the opposite direction, and looked up from the flowers to behold a light trotting-wagon disappearing under the leafy arcade of the avenue, driven by a man beside whom, in her white dress, bonnetless, with loose locks and a fan in her hand, sat Laura. "Dr. Babcock!" I thought, "and she is eloping with him!" I added, with sudden exultation. Before I had done with the flowers, and while still divided between anger and amusement, I saw Laura emerge from the dense shade and lounge across the garden, fanning herself. I rang and sent for her.

"Who was the person I saw you with just now?"

"A gentleman I met in the city at Greenes'; he called to take me riding, but I only went as far as the gate."

"Gracious goodness, Laura! You were talking to him in front of the house for half an hour."

"Well, and where was I to receive him? I couldn't ask him to walk into the kitchen and visit with him there."

"Certainly not, as I do not allow the maids to have men coming to see them. You are at liberty to go to town twice a month, and can see your men friends at Mrs. Greene's if she thinks proper. And never let me see you dressed in that ridiculous way again."

She withdrew sullenly, and from that day I was aware that there was bad blood between us. Her personal vanity was inordinate; she was an ugly little thing, all but her exquisite teeth, yet, although not tidy, she took great pains with her claw-like hands and her wisp of hair, and was always giving some fantastic twist to her poor little gowns. She had a mania for being seen, taking every excuse for presenting herself with a note, or card, or glass of water which it was somebody else's business to bring. She may have expected some of the young men who were staying with us to fall in love with her and marry her, for her head was stuffed with rubbish from Saturday newspapers and third-rate magazines. She had the evening to herself always, and often the afternoon, a quiet sewing-room to sit in, as well as the servants' hall, besides her comfortable bedroom, which nobody shared with her: so, as she had both place and time for reading, I offered to lend her books, and gave her some of Mrs. Oliphant's stories. She returned them to me in a day or two, and said, demurely, that she would prefer the history of France. A day or two later she brought back the first volume, saying,—

"I've read this, Mrs. Roland, but I haven't come to anything about my family yet."

"Your family?"

"Yes, the Dee Janneys. We're a French family."

"The Janets do you mean? The artists?"

"The *Dee* Janneys. I don't know whether they were artists or not, but they were related to the queen."

Time went on, and the situation became more and more strained. Laura was absorbed in herself, and as the preoccupations of disappointed love and the novelty of her position lost their freshness she grew restless and plainly pined for change. She became dissatisfied, began to neglect her work, was very impertinent now and then, and I lost my temper more than once. The summer drew to a close, and I decided to go to the sea-shore for a few days. I told Laura that I should take her with me, and gave her directions about some clothes I wished her to put in order before we left home which I should need immediately on my return. She had never been to the sea, and was greatly excited by the idea of that and of a large hotel full of people, and plied me

with questions about the mode of life. The evening before we were to start I wished to see the work I had given her to do. It was not finished.

"Why not? I told you five days ago that I should need it as soon as I came back. What have you been about?"

"I needed a new dress myself, that I might appear genteel at the hotels, and I hadn't time to get both done."

It required much self-control not to discharge her on the spot, but I merely said that as I should require the clothes as soon as I returned she must stay at home and finish them instead of going with me. The inconvenience was very great, but I went away and left her behind. When I came home I saw at once that she was still in a rage. On the first evening I had dressed for dinner, and was about to go down, when I asked about the work.

"It ain't done," she said, in full revolt. "I never touched it. You said you'd take me to the sea-shore, and you broke your promise; so I just sewed for myself all the while you were away, as I'm going to leave."

"You are, indeed," I replied. "To-morrow morning. So pack your trunk to-night."

"I will so, and I'm glad I'm going, and I'm very sorry I ever come, and I'm not a bit grateful to you for your kindness to me, and you've tried to set me against my true friends, and you're no lady, and I've hated you ever since the week I come and you insulted me by telling me to knock at Mr. Roland's door." Wherewith she kicked my train out of her way and marched out of the room, slamming the door after her.

The next morning there was a revulsion; she apologized, implored, and wept; but I paid her wages and the small additional sum lacking to enable her to reach home, and dismissed her without words.

I never saw her again, but I had not heard the last of her. More than a year after she left me I got a letter from her dated from a Western town, but not in Iowa, saying that sickness and sorrow had taught her a lesson, and begging me to take her into my service again, as her utmost desire was to prove to me that she could do better than when with me before. I answered that I had a very good maid, and that I should not re-engage her under any circumstances; that I was sorry for her troubles, but hoped they would not be thrown away upon her. A year later I received the following letter, which, like all the other documents in these recollections, I copy verbatim from the original, changing only the date and the signature:

"OKEEPOKE, KANSAS, January 29, 188-.

"MRS. ROLAND:

"DEAR MADAM,—You will think this letter a great piece of presumption, but I hope you will forgive me sufficiently to read it through, even if you take no further notice of it. When I was with you in capacity of *L's M.* I was partially insane and not myself. I continued in wretched health for two years, but went to Colorado Springs to spend last winter, since which time I have been in excellent health. My brother here is highly respectable, but has a large family and is not well off. I am poor, but being a leader in society here I have to keep up an appearance, and I write to beg you (if you can forgive the presumption) to please send me some of your old dresses, shoes, or anything your kind heart would be willing to send me. The truth is I have always craved some of your old clothes, you dressed in such exquisite taste. If you had any partie dresses or summer ones that you cannot make further use of, oh, if you only would send me some it would make me so happy. I am so fond of dress. Your maid could box them up and freight them to me. I would gladly pay the freight. This letter will at least divert you, for it is certainly a masterpiece of effrontery. I will send you a couple of papers to substantiate my claims to being a leader here; unfortunately you will not receive them until after you do this letter. I have an elegant black silk velvet dress and everything to match, but one dress will not support the rumor that I am worth nine thousand dollars.

"Yours most respectfully,

"LAURA B. JANNEY."

In a day or two the newspapers came, two numbers of the *Okeepoke Democrat*, a vilely-printed little single sheet of dingy aspect, smelling of cheap paper and ink. There was a column of foreign news, and another from Washington, but it was chiefly devoted to the interests of Lafayette County, of which Okeepoke seemed to be the principal town. Judging from the number of "personal items," it was what is called a society journal, and was the first specimen I had seen in this country, where until within a very few years the comings, goings, and doings of private people, however conspicuous, have been noticed only by the Sunday press.

These pages showed me how far the West is in advance of the East in such matters, and gave me a clearer notion of that portion of my country than a book of travels by a British M.P. could have done. There were accounts of murders by young men, "sons of prominent citizens," on old men of high standing, in consequence of money transactions regarding real estate or horses, with the proclamations of the Governor of the State and sheriff of the county offering rewards for their arrest. There were also evidences of a system of reciprocal flattery with exchange papers. I copy some paragraphs here and there:

"Major 'Bill Cush' is still staying here with his relatives and friends. Stay allers, Uncle Bill: we likes you."

"The senior editor and his wife received an invitation to attend a ball at



Dardanelles given by the Knights of Honour on the night of the 4th. Thanks. The tickets were printed at the Dardanelles *Kansian* office, and the job was first-class. The *Kansian* does as fine printing as can be done in the State."

"The Melontown *Eagle* comes to us loaded down to the guard with interesting matter every week."

"Thanks to Brother Morrison for a copy of the *Daily Marianna World*. Do us that way some more."

But I must not let this sociological study of the Southwest take up more space in a story which is spinning itself out too long. There were several marked paragraphs in each paper, and on the margin of one was pencilled, "Laura Janney wrote this." It took up a column; and I presently discovered that it was a burlesque on the account of a fancy-ball in the previous issue.

#### "THE BAL LEAP YEAR.

"On the evening of January 15th

'Night's starry hosts gathered in brightness high,  
And not a cloud darkened the shining sky,  
The moon rode by, and all her glittering band  
Bathed in a flood of light the shining land.'

And also bathed in a flood of light a band of Okeepoke's gallant, dashing young ladies as they joyously wended their way to Mr. Harris' parlors, there to meet and invite the blushing beaux to

'Come and trip it as you go  
On the light fantastic toe.'

"And they went and tripped it. In addition to our own smiling beauties we had a number of fair visitors from the neighboring cities, among whom shone radiantly Mr. Dicky Shepherd, of Fort Brown, elaborately dressed in a standing collar of white linen and side-laced boots with French heels; Mr. H. P. Sandford, Pleasant Mount's 'bright shining light,' charmingly attired in a coat of exasperated mouse color. . . . Among the paragons of beauty of our own glorious little city, without intentional invidiousness, we may mention Mr. Joshua Dillard, 'divinely tall and most divinely fair,' splendidly dressed in a *tall* suit of *broad* cloth, who even in simple jeans would be a belle in any ball; Mr. Ovid Ludlem, made the observed of all observers by the fashionable short cut of his hair; Mr. Idus Wilder, fascinating in long and beautiful curls, and, oh, such a love of a dancer. . . . Messrs. Magnus Montacute and Champ Cutting vied with each other in the height of their collars. . . . Mr. Bob Bradford, attracting much attention in high *spirits* and low shoes.

*One of the Girls."*

In another column there was a paragraph headed

#### "THE O. C. T. UNION

"Met pursuant to the adjournment at the Presbyterian church, on Monday night, January 19, President Washburn in the chair. The meeting was opened by religious exercises, prayer by Dr. J. C. Turner.

"Minutes of the last meeting read and approved.

"The committee on odes, Col. Essig chairman, failed to report, and continued.

"Miss Laura Janney having been selected at the previous meeting to read an essay at this meeting responded, announcing as her subject 'that wonderful anomaly of stubbornness and softness, selfishness and vanity, hypocrisy and candor, man.' She said, 'We should like to have chosen for the subject "The noblest work of God, the honest man," but so very few could have taken a personal interest in it that the essay would have been exceedingly dull to the majority. Man taken as a domestic animal is a wonderful creature.' Here the essayist branched off, displaying her talent in the rare art of word-pictures, portraying in various phases man's foibles and weaknesses in the domestic circle. Certainly every Benedict present felt considerably scathed. . . . 'It has always been incomprehensible why woman should have been called the weaker vessel, when it is expressly stated in the good book that man was made out of dust and woman out of a rib or bone; now common sense teaches that bone would make a much stronger vessel than dust. The solution is that man by chance has been enabled to add an immense amount of brass to his composition, thus rendering him stronger. . . . But one woman shows more capacity of endurance than ten men.'

. . . "The above is a brief analysis of the salient points of the essay. It was rich, tart, and humorous. In retiring from the floor the handsome critic bowed gracefully, saying,—

'And now, kind sirs, one and all adieu,  
Good luck, good wives, and good-night to you.'

"The essay was received by rounds of applause."

Another paragraph announced that "Miss Laura Janney was chosen secretary and treasurer *pro tem.* of the Union Sunday-school, last Sunday." Like one of my former applicants, she had the intellectual and poetical gifts, and spiritual gifts had been added to her. But her social feats were recorded in still other paragraphs, of which I give only the most important:

"RECEIVED CALLS.—On New Year's Day, as previously announced, Misses Laura Janney, Mamie Montacute, and Bonnie Cutting received calls at Mr. J. B. Janney's. About thirty persons called. The editor of this paper was among the number. The young ladies were elegantly attired, smiled sweetly, conversed charmingly, and entertained admirably. To them is due the credit of initiating the custom of 'Receiving calls on New Year's Day' in Okeepoke."

#### "THE BAL MASQUE.

"OKEEPOKE SECOND TO NONE.

*"The Old Year Dies while Witnessing a Revel among the Devotees of Terpsichore.*

"EDITOR *Okeepoke Democrat*,—In the midst of the rare festival which is the writer's present theme, he was feelingly reminded of Moore's beautiful lines:

'As onward we journey, how pleasant  
To pause and inhabit awhile  
Those few joyous spots like the present  
That 'mid the dull wilderness smile.'

"The Temple of Justice, the place where the wicked meet punishment and the righteous are avenged, was on the evening of the memorable 31st of December transformed for the while into a hall of revelry where thronged the bright, the gay and joyous of every age and sex. . . . All, indeed everything, that the most industrious preparations and fastidious taste could contrive had been arranged with a precision and perfection rarely ever attained upon occasions like this. . . . Among the elite of our own town may be mentioned Miss Mamie Montacute, splendidly dressed in a black silk; Miss Bonnie Cutting, popular and accomplished, attired in the perfection of fashion; Miss Gussie Bradford, whose nymphaean form and countenance dressed in white silk trimmed with black would be a model for any painter; Miss Addie Sandford, in a gorgeously red costume; Miss Sammie Cutting, dressed in black tarlatan decorated with large and beautiful cotton-rolls; Miss Emma White, dressed in a cozy suit of dark with snowy-white trimmings; Miss Mattie Turner, in a superb white satin, the most elegant costume on the floor, and the wearer not excelled by any in true worth and beauty; Miss Laura Janney, elegantly attired in a black velvet, and bright as a morning-glory. . . . At the hour of eleven supper was announced, and all repaired to Mr. F. M. Harris' new hotel, where was spread in abundance the best the land affords. Every one partook heartily and joyfully of the rich viands spread before them. There is not a better host in any country than Mr. H., but it would be unjust to give him all the credit, because his excellent lady deserves an equal share of the thanks and praises.

"Again the happy throng returned to the dance, and the 'wee small hours of the night' found them still keeping time to the inspiring notes of the Fort Brown band, until it seemed as if they were lost in the dizzy mazes of the waltz and rhapsodies of delight. Thus passed one of the happiest events in our history, and a great success in every respect. The excess in proceeds over expenses is to be donated to the Okeepoke Christian Temperance Union.

"When other temporal things are forgot this remarkable occasion will shine above the waste of memory."

For once I broke a rule and took no notice of these communications, and I heard no more of Laura for a twelvemonth. Exactly a year afterwards came the New Year number of the Okeepoke *Democrat*, with several marked paragraphs. The first was:

"On the 30th December, 188-, in Okeepoke, Mr. Charles Princeley and Miss Laura Janney were married. The ceremony was performed by Priest Heilig, of Glarus. The marriage took place at the residence of Mr. J. B. Janney about two o'clock P.M. There were about thirty guests. The dinner was exceedingly sumptuous. The large variety of cakes were as fine as we ever tasted, and they were the handiwork of Mrs. J. B. Janney. We never attended a wedding that went off more joyfully. We wish the couple health, wealth, and felicity."

"COMMITTED MATRIMONY.—It had been properly rumored and duly set forth for some time that our handsome and modest townsman Mr. Charles Princeley, of typo celebrity and formerly of Fort Brown, had won the affections of Miss Laura Janney, sister to Mr. J. B. Janney, the grocer merchant of Okeepoke. The matter assumed shape and culminated unusually pleasant on the afternoon of the 30th ult. Assembled to witness the ceremony and partake of the nuptial viands was a select group of the most intimate friends of the bride.

... At 4.22 the happy pair took leave on train for a bridal tour to the former home of the groom. We congratulate Mr. P. that he had not before fallen a victim, but had his affections in reserve for one so worthy as his accomplished bride. And we believe he will fully come up to the standard of husband."

A list of presents followed, given in the style which has been called Western Orientalism: "From Miss J. T., a beautifully embellished splasher; from Mr. A. P., a sparkling silver butter-knife," etc., etc.

Two more points in Laura's romance I made out from the *Democrat*: one, that she had become a Roman Catholic, for, besides the mention of significant presents such as crucifix and rosary, the officiating clergyman was spoken of in one place as Father Heilig; the other, that her bridegroom was on the editorial staff of the *Democrat*, as his name appeared in a corner heading: "Chas. Princeley, Assistant Local." A paragraph in the Town and Country Notes closed Laura's career for me, as this my last news of her came five years ago: "Mr. and Mrs. Charles Princeley returned from Fort Brown on Monday last."

We wish the couple health, wealth, and felicity!

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### A SPRING SONG.

O SUNSHINE, have you made the world all golden  
 With wondrous, magic art,  
 Or can it be this light, so new yet olden,  
 That floods my happy heart?  
 I cannot tell: I only know to-day  
 Life dances in the sunshine all the way.

O apple-blossoms, all the branches pluming  
 With feathery sprays of white,  
 A precious flower for me alone is blooming:  
 It opens to the light.  
 And is it you, with petals falling fleet,  
 Or is it this, that makes the world so sweet?

O joyous birds, I think I hear you singing  
 A glad, exultant lay;  
 And yet the song that in my heart is ringing  
 Outsings your voice to-day.  
 You cannot learn that song, dear little birds:  
 "He loves me, loves me, loves me," are the words.

Bessie Chandler.

## EXPERIENCES OF A PUBLIC LECTURER.

DURING the past fifteen years, I have, in addition to some work of authorship, travelled extensively as a public lecturer. There has been no season, and have been few months, of any year, in which I have not filled some platform engagements. This task has been a laborious and exacting one; it has withheld from me some of the time and energy that perhaps might as well have been put into literary effort; but it is not without satisfactions and fascinations, and carries with it the charm of fair and immediate financial rewards.

My lecturing efforts began at home, upon my father's farm. Having succeeded in hearing two or three good speakers who had visited our little neighboring village, I decided straightway that forensic effort was to be part of my life-business. So the sheep and cattle were obliged to hear various emotional opinions on subjects of more or less importance, and our steeds of the plough enjoyed a great many comfortable rests between furrows in order to "assist" at my oratorical displays. One of them persisted in always going to sleep before the discourse was finished,—a custom that is not obsolete even among his human superiors.

The first lecture-course of this series came to an end quite suddenly; for my shrewd, hard-headed New-England father began to suspect that agriculture was being sacrificed to eloquence. So he appeared unexpectedly in the audience during a *matinée*, and told me he had heard most of the harangue, and that he feared I was spoiling a tolerably good farmer to become an intolerably bad orator. Though of a kindly, generous disposition, he could throw into his less gracious words a great deal of sarcasm to the square inch, and the lecturer of the afternoon, crushed but not convinced, wakened the off-horse and thoughtfully drove his plough towards the blue woods at the other end of the furrow.

It is a pleasant memory that my father lived to see me earning a hundred dollars a night, and admitted, with a grave twinkle in his eye, that, having looked the matter over from a non-agricultural stand-point, he had concluded there was more in me than he had supposed.

But in those boy-days both lecturing and literature developed very slowly. How was I to get audiences, either for pen or voice? The harvest was ripe, but there were great reapers thundering up and down the field and warning me, with my poor little sickle, to keep out of the way. Gough could charm a hundred thousand people per year; Anna Dickinson stood in the heyday of her forensic glory; Theodore Tilton



was doing the youthful prodigy act in all the States of the Union; Phillips was making us almost glad that The Arts were Lost, by deploring in so fascinating a manner the oblivion that enveloped them; and twenty or thirty whose names are now scarcely remembered occupied more or less of the public attention. There seemed little hope for a beginner.

But the great secret of commencing is *to commence where one can*. During my course in college it appeared that several small towns in the county which could not afford expensive lectures wanted and would pay for something to amuse them for an evening; that there existed among these people a class who were tired of burnt-cork and sleight-of-hand shows, and wanted something which professed to be intellectual; and so I "did" all the neighboring hamlets that I could induce to hear me. The financial advantage was not bewildering, and generally consisted of half the net proceeds. After the door-keeper had had his percentage, and the sexton his guerdon, and the printer his dues, and the bill-poster his back-pay, the half of what was left was almost as much as the whole of it (although even then perhaps worth as much as the entertainment).

But the practice of meeting audiences of all descriptions has proved invaluable ever since. Declaiming upon the sea-shore would have been a tender, mild sort of discipline compared to it. Mothers brought their babies, and they competed with me for a hearing; coughs and sneezes and clearings of husky throats were seldom suppressed; and most of the cheering, if done at all, came from the leathern-clad palm of the foot, rather than from the softly sonorous surface of the hand. But these country-people had as good hearts and as healthy brains as can be found in city or university, and I always went away in love with my audience. "You have let considerable light into this district," said one bright-eyed farmer boy; "and you've started me on the up-track." My payment for that evening's work was five dollars and a half in money, and a compliment estimated at, at least, a million dollars. The rough, homespun fellow who gave it may not read this, for he has gone on into the Great Unknown; but he holds an earthly residence in at least one heart.

My resources from the platform slowly increased, and finally resulted in enough to pay a fair portion of the expenses of a college course. Soon after graduation, I began to receive calls from various towns in the State, which were becoming acquainted with me through my literary work. This soon extended to adjoining States, and so all over this country and England, and gave me some very interesting experiences, and many first-class exhibits of human nature.

Of course, the hardest work of the lecturer is the travelling. The novelty soon wears away; the trips are sometimes long and irksome; many trains run without drawing-room cars or sleepers; most brakemen and conductors have little more than a rudimentary idea of calories and pneumatics; drivers shake you up in coupling, with the huge battering-rams of their locomotives; the dark-browed accident-angel is always ready to make a bid for your life; the train-boy covers you with excellent books by other authors; you are snowed in and blockaded out; you are stared at by some one who has heard you and communicates the curiosity-virus to everybody in the coach; you are worried about making train-connections; you are bewildered in the impenetrable thickets of an "official railroad guide;" you are sometimes "laid out," and unable to reach your engagement in time, if at all.

Perhaps you find you can get there at from nine to half-past ten o'clock; and then begins a telegraphic effort to coax the audience to stay. If there are enough jolly, good-natured spirits among them to induce them to make a night of it, they will do so: in six instances out of seven this is the case. Dear old Josh Billings once clambered up the rostrum stairs at ten forty-five, while his expectant audience were hilariously singing, "We won't go home till morning." "If I'd ha' known that," exclaimed the genial humorist as he turned smilingly around to them, "I wouldn't ha' hurried up so."

The motto of the successful lecturer must be, "Never miss an engagement, if money and work will put you through." "GET THERE," tolls relentlessly in his ears. He rises at all hours of the night, and sets out on his lonesome journeys; he drives in carriages or carts long distances across country, from railroad to railroad, or to inland towns; he begs general and division superintendents by telegraph to let him off at way-stations, or to hold an express train till he can reach it (and is generally accommodated with prompt and splendid courtesy); he is not above a trip on a hand-car or a railroad velocipede; he charts a locomotive, clings to its shaking arms as it hurls him along at sixty miles an hour, and looks placidly at its red iron lips while they perhaps devour his whole fee and part of another.

Sometimes he gets within a few miles of his goal and there is neither train nor carriage to be had. Then, if he is full-blooded and strong of limb, he will make a pedestrian dash for it; and his audience like him all the better for the effort he put forth to get to them. All these incidents may happen once or many times in a season; and yet some people think the lecturer earns his money too easily.

But travelling has its pleasures. Congenial friends often spin the fleecy distance into threads of golden miles. Human-nature-away-

from-home is around you everywhere, and amuses and instructs, when you are not too tired to observe it. People often talk over your last book or lecture with charming frankness and thoroughness, not knowing that their Theme is in the car-seat immediately behind them, enveloped in great-coat and travelling-hat, and not looking at all as he looked on the platform. In such cases you cannot help overhearing, for the railroad tone is generally a loud one; and you get some very refreshing pieces of criticism, which will benefit you if permitted.

Sometimes you have the pleasure of being discussed with yourself. A very pretty young lady dropped daintily, one evening, into the empty car-seat beside me. She seemed mentally disturbed concerning something, and finally asked me if our train was on time. I was obliged to tell her that it was about an hour late. She gave a little sigh, and remarked, "I am *so* sorry! Will Carleton is to lecture in our town to-night, and I wanted to get home in time to hear him." I replied that I believed an arrangement had been made that he was not to commence his lecture until the arrival of our train. At this she nestled coseyly into the seat, and appeared quite contented. But after a few miles of silence she asked if I had ever heard him. I replied, "Yes, several times." "And how did you like him?" she said. I was obliged to reply that I had seen a great many lecturers whom I had enjoyed better. At this she glanced up at me with a kind of "mean old thing" expression of face, and there was a perceptible coldness between us. But she soon melted again sufficiently to ask me all sorts of interesting questions concerning myself, which I answered, blushing, as well as I could. I had much to do to repress my laughter, and still more upon seeing her in the audience an hour or two later with a very bewildered expression upon her comely face.

Upon arriving at his destination, the lecturer is generally taken in courteous charge by some member of the committee and escorted to his stopping-place. This is sometimes a hotel, sometimes a private residence; but with rare exceptions he is given a comfortable, cosey place in which to rest from his journey before the labors of the evening. One of these exceptions I recall,—when I had travelled a night and part of a day by rail, and then had driven on rough roads twenty-five miles against a fierce snow-storm, to make my town. Although apprised by telegraph of my coming (I arrived about half-past seven), the urbane committee-man took no pains to meet me, allowed me to be bundled into a cold hotel-room to change my clothes, and finally proposed that I deduct a portion of my fee for commencing half an hour late.

But these are cases that one strikes very rarely, and I seldom leave

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a lecture-committee without a grasp of the hand that means, at least upon my part, friendship and esteem.

Some lecturers prefer going invariably to a hotel; but I must confess that I much enjoy the occasional hospitality of a private family. They generally prove to be pleasant, intellectual, cordial friends, who introduce the weary wayfarer to cosy parlors, music, flowers, and often pretty and well-trained children. They are usually content to let him talk much or little, as he may wish, and, on the whole, make him a temporary member of the family, if he will let them,—which, if he is at all genial, he certainly feels inclined to do.

Arrived at the lecture-platform, the candidate for popular approval is generally introduced to his audience by the chairman of the lecture-committee, the mayor, the colonel, the leading clergyman, or some other distinguished member of the community. These introductions form of themselves a school of literature, and are quite a study. Some of them are as straight as a deal of lightning, and you are left with the audience upon your hands almost before you know it. Others occupy from ten minutes to half an hour. Some are reminiscent in their tendency, others biographical; and these give you a number of startling facts concerning your career. Some of them consist largely of material implicating the introducer; others remind one of Artemus Ward's friend who wanted to speak for a culprit at a hanging and chose as his subject the protective tariff. Some of the introductions are very happy, some rather unhappy. I was not long ago praised to the echo, and my name mentioned as a household word, by a gentleman who afterwards had to turn to me, in the face of a large audience, and admit that the name had slipped his memory. But they all mean well, and generally do well.

You are now standing before your audience,—maybe in an opera-house, with amphitheatrical seats,—maybe in a town-hall, as angular as a match-box,—maybe in a court-room, with the ghosts of tedious lawsuits hovering about,—perhaps in a church, with straight rows of pews stretching back interminably. The acoustic properties of the hall may be superb, or every tone may go to pieces as soon as it is launched; you have begged the sexton to turn on plenty of fresh air, and maybe he will do it. Your hearers are from all sorts of homes, all manner of sects, all grades of society. They have paid to get in here and see you, and you are their property for the evening. As Topsy was the whole family, so you are the whole show. For the first fifteen minutes you are studied, scrutinized, relentlessly criticised, by those who have a right to do so and avail themselves of it promptly. You are reviewed, from front hair to gaiters; the two twin guns of many an opera-glass are relentlessly trained upon you.

At the end of these ten or fifteen minutes, if you have become at all *en rapport* with your audience, they cease to scan, and begin to listen. Then your friends—the ones you would love if you lived with them,—the ones whose souls emigrated from the same regions of the Mysterious Country as did yours—open the windows of their faces, and send you carrier-pigeons of smiles. The interest grows; new friends join your party; you feel more and more at home; you *are* at home. The old hackneyed lines of your lecture glow with new meaning to you, furnished from the hearts of these new-old friends. You feel that the audience is helping you, sympathizing with you, loving you. The remainder of the evening is a garden of pleasure; your path is strewn with roses, so thick that they shield you from the thorns; and you close with a little pang of regret.

Of course there are exceptions; once in a while an audience has to be encountered that would need all the tongues of men and angels, and considerable charity besides, to make it endurable. Every one seems in a half-comatose condition, and insusceptible of sustaining a feeling of any kind. I have sometimes almost prayed for a mild earthquake, or *something* that would rouse them. In one case it was explained to me that a funeral had taken place, two hours before, in the same church, and the congregation hadn't quite got over it. I sincerely hope that they recovered before the coming of the next lecturer on the course.

But the usual drawback in this respect is one, or two, or more, who apparently *will not* have their composed features disarranged by anything said or done. These well-meaning but plain-featured people are the lecturer's rocks, upon which his enthusiasm will rive in twain,—if he will allow it. Lecturers differ in regard to these encumbrances. Some ignore them, and appeal to the agreeable and helpful portion of their audiences, leaving their indifferent foes to "fall in," if they like. Others are attracted constantly to these sour faces by the fascination of repulsion; still others address themselves to the ungrateful task of winning the facial enemies over. The last-named are in the minority; for lecturers find that a face is sometimes a mask, and it may be that the heart and the countenance are not working together.

Applause varies greatly with different audiences. Some are very demonstrative, and respond continually; others are quiet, but not less appreciative. Distinguished lecturers and readers have been known to pause in the midst of their discourse and beg their hearers, if they pleased, to favor them with a little cheering. This, however, does not have a very good effect on an audience; not half so good as did the method of poor Artemus Ward, who used to stop suddenly at the end



of an anecdote and exclaim, blandly, "The audience will now please laugh." They always did.

Once I remember hearing the lamented George Francis Train, in his wild, evanescent, single-handed Presidential campaign, say to a very self-restrained audience, "All in favor of my being President say 'Ay!'" Not a mouth responded. "All opposed to my being President say 'No,' then!" shouted the agitator. Still not an auditor said a word. The lone politician looked quietly over his hearers, not in the least abashed at their frigidity. "I had intended to take the sense of the audience concerning this momentous question," he remarked, mildly; "but if the audience *has* no sense, we will pass on."

But the lecturer needs all the help he can get from his constituency of an evening, for he has many obstacles to vanquish. There are late comers, who almost invariably break in two for a little time the chain of thought and feeling; there are villanously screeching doors, which find an echo in every one of his nerves; there are occasionally people who desert him in the midst of his remarks and go drearily out at the door; there are sometimes yelping dogs in the aisles, and unruly boys in the halls; but the grand co-operation of a sympathetic audience will at last sweep all these obstacles before it, and a lecturer who feels that he has succeeded in pleasing his hearers closes the evening's work with a genial "Come to my arms and be hugged" feeling towards every one of them, good, bad, and indifferent.

My own lectures have generally been interspersed with selections from my poems; so that my efforts have really consisted of a lecture and reading combined. I have thus learned to sympathize with a large and worthy class of elocutionists, of both sexes, who entertain audiences splendidly, and whose interpretations have gone far towards introducing authors to new readers. Their experience with animate and inanimate objects is to a great extent the same as that of a lecturer.

I am often importuned by near and dear friends to cease the exacting and fatiguing platform work and devote myself entirely to home comfort and literary work. I have often half promised to do so; but the other half of the promise still lingers, meshed in the fascinations of brilliant audiences, meetings face to face with dear and appreciative readers, and close and beneficial studies of genuine human nature. I intend to give it up very soon, indeed; but—exactly *how* soon I can't really find the heart to say.

Will Carleton.

## PRIZE ESSAY No 1.

*SOCIAL LIFE AT PRINCETON.*

**E**XTENDED along its one main thoroughfare, Nassau Street, which is simply a portion of the old royal highway from New York to Philadelphia, lies the little town of Princeton. If you drive down from New York, as many do,—mostly travelling salesmen, however,—your first view of the town will be gained as you pass over the low elevation of Rocky Hill. At your feet lies the little village of Kingston, which in time past contended for the honor of having the college; below that is a canal, and a branch of the Pennsylvania Railway. Beyond, the country gradually rises and for several miles presents a pleasant alternation of groves and fields, dotted with white houses, until, set upon a hill on the horizon itself, thickly surrounded with elms and sycamores, rise the domes and spires that mark the location of Princeton. If your first view be taken just at sunset, you will be ready to aver that a more beautiful sight than that of these glittering landmarks rising amid the sea of foliage is seldom seen.

But more probably you will come down by rail; in which case your sensations are likely to be of a less agreeable character. At the Junction you are warned to "change for Princeton;" and so you hastily alight, and look all about for the "other train." Presently there comes puffing round a corner something that upon examination proves to be what you are seeking. In the haste of departure, apparently, they have attached the locomotive by the wrong end and fastened the head-light upon the tender. These matters being righted, you clamber on board. This branch road was built for the express convenience of the old town. It is only three miles long, and after descending to the canal it extends up a very heavy grade for the last mile until the half-summit is reached. Just as you pass by an imposing building the train stops, and you discover that the road has suddenly come to an end, upon the very corner of the college campus.

Judging from besieging porters and beckoning hackmen, and from the shouts for baggage that fill the air, the new-comer at once concludes that Princeton is a great city. Of course he will ask for directions to the leading hotel. Some one of the fraternity forthwith grasps his valise and escorts him round one side of a block to the Nassau, and then, without a blush, demands a quarter for his services. The traveller pays it, and thus, if a prospective student, learns his first lesson.

After dinner will come the second,—that the *city* consists of college and seminary as a nucleus, around which are clustered a few business houses, a few private residences, the colored quarter,—and that is all.

In a few days, having explored the college halls, procured a room, passed examination, matriculated by signing an iron-clad agreement to abstain utterly from all secret societies except two, and having hunted up a supply of books and “other furniture,” we shall find him coseily established and most probably at work ; for little leisure is afforded a man just after entrance here. He is required to get into harness at once, and to pull steadily.

Social life at Princeton, or at any college town, can be taken to mean little, except the social life of the students. Of what is usually known as society, Princeton has almost nothing. Life here is semi-monastic ; society is that of one’s fellows of the cloister ; and of social events it can only be said that they are somewhat more frequent than angels’ visits.

The first of these in the student’s history occurs in a few weeks after entrance, after he has ceased to tremble at the thought of midnight visits from the upper-classmen—a social custom that is, we hope, happily discontinued by the general assent of every class now in college—and has become somewhat accustomed to the routine of his new life. Every member of the incoming class finds himself in receipt of an invitation from the venerable President to attend a reception at his residence. Excitement ensues ; wardrobes are ransacked and set in order ; lessons are hastily read, or pushed aside ; visions of bright forms and thoughts of conquest flit through the undergraduate mind ; upper-classmen are quizzed as to the probabilities of the evening, social, and even gastronomical. At the appointed time, a long train of students file into the President’s library, and are warmly received by that gentleman, his wife, various members of the Faculty, and a large corps of ladies from the homes of professors and from the families of ancient lineage, of which there are several in Princeton. To the inquiring mind two things are at once apparent : first, that the upper-classmen have prevaricated in stating that the new-comer would meet here the same ladies that had entertained his father before him, and, secondly, that the proportion of ladies to students is so small that none but the brave, and moreover the very strategical, will be likely to secure more than a word with any one of them. But no one retires discouraged. Little systems of student satellites revolve about the centres of attraction ; the hum of conversation and ripple of laughter are unceasing ; while Dr. and Mrs. McCosh move about among the groups, exerting a genial influence over the entire assemblage.

Refreshments announced are a signal for a general settlement of affairs. All gravitate towards the region of cake and ice-cream ; here whole groups, there some fortunate one with the lady of his choice, or, it might be more accurate to say, of his capture. If we could watch this fortunate individual till the hour of departure arrives, if we could know what takes place as he escorts his lady homeward and endeavors to improve his time in establishing his newly-formed acquaintance, the probability is that we should be surprised, as he is, when the moment of parting has come. There is a simple good-night and nothing more, except perhaps a peculiar ejaculation from the disappointed one as he realizes that all his efforts have failed to secure him an invitation to call and an entrance into Princeton society. And possibly this his third lesson will be mercilessly driven home on the following day, when he meets the lady and no token of recognition is vouchsafed him. Not all are so unfortunate as he ; but thus untimely fall the air-castles of most Princeton Freshmen.

Thereupon he turns to college organizations, realizing that, for the time at least, in them must be found his society,—that outside of college work and college men there will be little to occupy his time and attention. He is not left long to look about him. The two most prominent college organizations, the Cliosophic and American Whig Literary Societies, have probably long before this waited upon him through their representatives and have invited him within their mysterious walls ; and within the walls of one of them he is very sure to go. No other secret societies being permitted by college law, these absorb a large membership, and are thus all the better fitted to promote friendships among the students. Here begins a general acquaintance with members of all classes, and usually almost the only acquaintanceships of the first college year. Rivalry runs high between the two societies at all times. Every man of the incoming class is informed and re-informed of the respective honors won and likely to be won by representatives of each society ; the strife for distinction is continued till Commencement Day, when it reaches its climax in the wild bursts of cheering with which the walls of the old First Church re-echo, as the lists of Fellows and Prizemen are read, and each Hall greets its own with a thrilling chorus, startling to the uninitiated.

Upon entrance to these societies begins to disappear the strong class feeling between those parts of the two lower classes that belong to the same Hall. Enough is still left, however, to give a keen relish to public occasions in which the two come together,—notably during the speeches and debates on Washington's Birthday. Here class feeling invariably flashes up for the last time, and expends itself in a ludicrous

display of lung-power from the Sophomore gallery as the Freshmen, foiled in their attempt to secure the aforesaid gallery, pass to seats below.

Other planes of cleavage, temporary and shifting, divide the college world on certain occasions, perhaps the athletic from the non-athletic, with others to be mentioned later ; but the above are the principal ones. They will be found not to affect in the least the intense unity of the college in any question pertaining to matters outside of itself.

As regards class feeling in the early part of the course, it is proper and necessary to speak of hazing ; and a very few words will suffice. The wild reports that have been circulated through the newspaper world within a few years have had only the barest foundation in fact. The unparalleled atrocities, and so on, have consisted in a quiet call upon some unwary Freshman, a reading of some Greek or Latin author to the company by their unwilling host, probably from a recumbent position upon the table, and, finally, an invitation given him to retire to his couch, in most cases promptly accepted. Occasional instances of a departure from this rule have been exaggerated to the utmost, for reasons best known to the reporters. At last, however, Princeton has followed the example of other institutions in this respect. By the action of the student body itself, acting in conjunction with the Faculty, hazing this year has been unknown, and there is every reason to believe that it will henceforth remain so.

The two Halls are the first societies, with one exception, to make the new student feel at home by giving him friends, placing him in the midst of responsibilities and duties, and setting before him an incentive to their performance. That exception, the Philadelphian Society, or college Y.M.C.A., does more than either of them in a certain direction. While the Hall representatives wage an eager contest over the newcomer, this society sends him a quiet but earnest invitation ; and he generally responds. Here begins a distinct feature of college life, which in many cases leads to a first acquaintance with life outside of the college and surrounding it. The organization brings together a larger proportion of college men than any other interest ; class lines utterly disappear within it, as a matter of course. Large as is the membership, general acquaintance is made more of a point than even in the literary Halls with their lesser numbers.

The churches of Princeton and of the neighboring country-side call upon the Y.M.C.A. for assistants in almost every variety of church work ; every country school-house within a reasonable walking-distance has also its Sabbath-school, and in this work numbers are employed. Others are assigned, through proper committees, to work in class and



college. Semi-weekly meetings are held, and in each class is organized a Sabbath-evening meeting, in addition to classes for Bible study and so on. The prominence given to this element of life at Princeton is one distinguishing mark of the college. Nothing could sooner remove from the stranger the idea that he is a stranger in a strange land.

By these three organizations a man is welcomed right heartily, is introduced to a circle of friends, to pleasant rooms, to well-stocked libraries, and is given plenty of work to do, and inducements for doing it. There is no exclusiveness,—*all* are welcome,—and the fees are almost nominal. What more could he ask?

In the class, acquaintances form slowly: first among those who chance to occupy adjacent rooms in the same dormitory, and secondly among those who are brought together in the class divisions. Those who do not meet in the recitation-room often remain mere bowing acquaintances during the greater part of the course. Personal affinity decides who are to be friends; and it is not long before kindred spirits begin to unite, and little cliques are formed that endure till graduation-day. It is a study in itself to note the traits of temperament that distinguish each one: the literary; the athletic; the "pollers" and "antipollers" (which is, by interpretation, the studious and otherwise); the wealthy clique; the fast clique; the medical clique,—medical in the future tense,—and so on. Some cliques are formed simply by the influence of some popular spirit round which others gather: there seem to be men in each class who have this power from the start. It is noticeable that this popularity does not always endure after the men have been together long enough for character to become known; but in general it does, and these men continue leaders among their fellows and are honored with no end of offices by them. Another class, earnest and self-contained, win universal respect, but are always in a measure left to themselves. There is also the unpopular man, who may be wealthy, while the popular one may be "working his way through." These are the types of the most strongly marked individualities; the rest are average men.

Princeton is intensely democratic and practical. We venture the assertion that in no other college is less attention paid to dress and more to character in deciding who shall be associates. The poorest student *may* affiliate with the richest one,—though as a general thing he doesn't. And in regard to style in dress a latitude is allowed that might be alarming to some. That is, there is no standard save that of means, and no display by any one. No one is expected to maintain any degree of style, save just what he is able to do conveniently; and it does not take long for five hundred and fifty men to become well enough ac-

quainted to allow a degree of freedom in this respect that is altogether home-like.

Of the smaller college organizations, the most important are those which carry on the college periodicals, the Dramatic Association, and the Glee Club. Of the former there are three: the first, composed of Seniors, publishing a literary monthly; the second, a tri-weekly sheet of general college news; the third, but recently instituted by the Y.M.C.A., a distinctively religious monthly. Members of the first two are chosen by their predecessors. The Dramatic Association is partly or wholly reorganized by competition every time a new play is to be given. The Glee Club needs no description. Next to it come the Banjo Club, and a host of minor assemblages,—the Chess Club, the Gun Club, the Hare and Hounds Club, the Horse Club, etc., the Literary Club, every imaginable sort of club except the kind that has two or more Greek letters as its title and is a secret society.

These lead us from the literary round to the athletic side of college life. Here, of course, stands the Athletic Association, hand in hand with the various "Varsity" and class teams, foot-ball, base-ball, lacrosse, and others. In these, every man in college takes a keen interest; and during the season of any particular game it forms an unfailing topic of conversation wherever two or more are gathered together. The number of men enlisted in any one of them is comparatively small, however, and among that number there is a fair proportion of good students. Betting upon games, while, like other vices, it may not be unknown, is not generally practised. Many a slur upon Princeton would never have been uttered had the author of it distinguished between college men and those having no immediate connection with the college.

Just here it may be well to state that it is not at any time possible for athletics to absorb the entire attention of the college, though for half the year they form the topic of interest and conversation in comparison with which all others sink into insignificance. The hard work goes on; but recitations and lectures and essays are not inspiring themes of conversation or of newspaper correspondence. Hence the prevailing opinion among a certain class, and the regulation joke, that athletics form the most important branch of study. During the winter there is a change; the college world settles down to work in earnest, while the gymnasium furnishes all with needed exercise. This necessarily involves monotony, relieved in a measure by an occasional performance by the Dramatic Association or Glee Club, interesting lectures by professors or visiting lecturers, and other entertainments, musical and literary. Much is accomplished in every department of college work.

After the April vacation, work is purposely made lighter during the short remainder of the year; but the same unvarying daily routine continues, the 8.15 morning chapel, and three lectures or recitations at convenient hours. Attendance on all is obligatory, but not with the cast-iron rigidity of the olden time: a liberal number of absences are allowed, and all reasonable excuses are accepted. At the brief morning service there are always some who have risen late and are thinking about a deferred breakfast, and others whose minds are occupied with next hour's recitation; but we believe that there is little real dissatisfaction with the system of required attendance.

Returning to our subject, we notice another variety of the club species, last and greatest,—the Eating Club. We have no Memorial Hall, no public refectory, hence the whole college divides into groups of from six to thirty, each located in a room of some private house. Each is either under the entire direction of some student, or is managed by the landlady, who allows the club leader a percentage for each boarder. From the nature of the case, membership in these clubs is general; but the membership in any particular one regulates itself in course of time on the general principle of personal affinity and the subordinate one of cookery. In dull circles, where silence and constraint prevail, the best of fare will not hold the men together; in others some ruling spirit or brilliant intellect holds sway, until men leave tables perhaps better furnished for the sake of his society.

These circles are the centres of daily intercourse; and here is the proper place to study individuals and the general course of college life. Listen to the conversation at any one of these tables for ten minutes, and you will have a clearer idea of the character of every man there present, and of what is actually going on in the college, than can possibly be obtained in so short a time in any other way. Each circle has a tendency to some particular topic,—philosophy, literature, athletics, politics, or fashion, and so on down. Each circle takes to itself a name, in most cases, of peculiar significance, as the *Eta Pi*, or the *Chaucer*, in which the dual object of the association is excellently set forth.

Most of these exist from year to year only. But one, the Ivy Club, merits special attention. It is a permanent, regularly incorporated organization, to which members are chosen by ballot; and it possesses a finely-appointed club-house, with every convenience not merely for the physical refreshment of its members, but also to suit their musical and literary taste and need of recreation.

The price of board at the clubs is in general not great, ranging from three to seven dollars per week,—the favorite price being four dollars.

It is now time to consider whether there is any society for a Princeton man outside of college walls. We have said that there is but little; it could not be otherwise with so large a student body in so small a town. Still, though it is comparatively small, a second element of society does exist; and the problem with the average man is how to find entrance thereto,—a problem which most fail to solve. Whether there are not rather more failures than the numerical relation between the two elements will justify, is a question to which the writer has devoted a great deal of study, and which he is prepared to discuss with much feeling and eloquence.

Three clearly-distinguished classes exist in the town. Of only two is it necessary to speak. The first prides itself upon its ancestry, its high education, and perhaps its wealth; the second possesses something less of each. As regards these, the result of the writer's investigations seems to show that, with the few exceptions that prove the rule, there is no social intercourse between them and the college world.

The reason of this he has vainly endeavored to fathom. He has subjected himself personally to be "suppressed and sat upon" in the pursuit of knowledge, and has secured more suppression than knowledge; he has questioned the favored few to whom the sacred portals are opened; and he has sent secret emissaries abroad amid the ranks of both society classes. The result is contradiction, absolute and discouraging. On the one hand, the responsibility is laid upon the students. Of them it is said, "We are willing to admit them to our homes; but they will not accept our invitations, therefore they receive none." On the other hand, it is placed upon the exclusiveness of the society that frowns upon the neighboring student body as being transient, doubtful, unknown, and utterly unreliable.

It is hard to believe that it is the exclusiveness of the student that keeps him shut in his cloister away from the cheerful parlors of the homes about him; it is also hard to disbelieve the assurance of one whose place in the best class of society is second to none, that the students alone are responsible.

The college man is often without social credentials, it is true, and especially so in Princeton, whose sons gather from all parts of the continent; it is also true that a short time among the men of any college will stamp a man with his true worth more accurately than any number of letters of introduction could do; it is further true that in some other college towns, neither greater nor less than ours, the students are freely admitted and invited to all social events, and to the houses of professors and society leaders. Here we are met by the objections already stated,—that in Princeton there are no social events, and that small and quiet

social or family circles have no wish to be disturbed by a train of callers. We are then driven to remark, finally, with a disclaimer as to personal experience in *this* matter, that it is hard to explain why, after such an incident as that of the President's reception, the lifted hat should fall before a stare of purposed non-recognition.

We have already hinted at methods by which a fortunate few may enlarge their general acquaintanceship and attain to the presence and speech of ladies other than their landlady and washerwoman. One of these is in the line of Sabbath-school work. We presume that after this statement there will be an unprecedented rush of laborers into this field; and perhaps some good may thus be accomplished. The men who are assigned to work connected with any church step at once into the midst of a pleasant circle of co-workers from the best class of society. Acquaintances formed in the line of duty are no less enjoyable than if formed with a direct view to pleasure or society, and to a certain extent may and do lead in that direction.

Further, the man of musical taste and ability may find a way open through some church choir, or the Choral Union of the town. Another may be more fortunate at the Freshman Reception than was the individual we noticed, and may secure the coveted invitation to call. The professors are, without exception, kind and cordial in their personal relations with the students. But there is so strong a feeling in college against trying from interested motives to secure the favorable opinion of any professor, that most men refuse to avail themselves of offered opportunities which might justly be improved, and hence lose certain advantages, and perhaps close another door to society against themselves.

A foothold once secured, it is not necessary to specify the means by which it is enlarged and made permanent. Great circumspection is required; a knowledge of lawn tennis is of value. Whatever be the means employed, we shall soon see the lucky man with his lady in attendance at a ball game on the "Varsity grounds;" and when finally she appears by his side in the gallery of Marquand Chapel, the climax is reached: he is the envy of all undergraduate beholders; ambition has no higher sweep. There are in store for him, during his stay in Princeton, calls, drives, tennis-games, excursion-parties, and all those things that tend to relieve him from the unhappiness of a hermit life.

But what of those less favored? We have gone the round of college life, and have shown what is open to them. The pleasure-loving devote themselves to some club and to out-of-door sports. The studious ones, after a time, become deeply interested in their work. The confinement of position and lack of society are either obviated by an occasional visit to a more distant outside world, or forgotten in the com-



petition for the many objects of ambition that present themselves. There are college prizes innumerable; Hall prizes; the distinction of high standing, of athletic excellence, and so on *ad infinitum*. These exist in every college; but we are compelled to devote ourselves to them more closely than some others, by the circumstances above mentioned, and by the system of required studies, which measures a candidate for intellectual honors by a fixed standard.

And so in these pursuits' week follows week; course after course is completed; the round of the year is run; and there is perhaps no feeling of more unalloyed pleasure than that of being on the train for home after the completion of the terrible first year, with the consciousness of duty done, and with a well-earned summer vacation ahead of one.

The second year is even more quiet than the first, because offering less of novelty. Student escapades being reduced to a minimum, the Sophomores are expected to behave nearly as well as any other class. Little is left of the usual opening disturbances, except the cane spree; and this can hardly be termed a disturbance. With us it is simply a trial of strength between six chosen champions from the two lower classes, who enter the contest two at a time. It is carried on at dead of night, but under the direct supervision of the moon, certain college officers, and student representatives. It was on a small scale the first illustration of that principle of government by faculty and students acting together which now, as at Amherst, is more fully carried out by the election of a student committee to confer with the faculty in all matters pertaining to discipline.

The cane spree over, there is nothing more not already noted, except some exceedingly social winter snowballing, until June, when a reception is tendered the Seniors by the Sophomore class. This is always an enjoyable affair. Not infrequently it is attended with some degree of expense to the management,—a burden which does not fall upon the entire class, but upon a committee of wealthy men. In fact, it is at a man's own option whether his course here shall be expensive or very inexpensive. He need not be a candidate for the Reception Committee or the Ivy Club; and he need not become a ladies' man. The chances are against his succeeding in either of these directions. And, apart from such things as these, any student of fair capacity can get through on a phenomenally small amount of cash capital.

Junior year comes and passes almost imperceptibly, and brings with it the necessity of preparing and publishing the *Bric à Brac*, or college annual. Men of artistic ability are elected to perform this duty, and its performance keeps them busy till Christmas. The social event

of the year is the Junior Cotillion. Like the Sophomore Reception, it is purely a college affair, and guests come from far as well as near. Senior year has also its cotillion, and a parting reception or two by members of the Faculty.

Graduation Day comes, when every Senior is a hero, and, laden with all the honors he may have won, is at last introduced to the world. He enters into a new life; the things that made him great in college are of no value in determining his present greatness; and what debarred him from society now gives him a right to enter it. But to enter it he is not well prepared unless he has enjoyed special advantages before his entrance to college or during his vacations. If he have these advantages, his temporary seclusion is not in the least to be regretted by him; if he have them not, he cannot acquire the social graces, save in so far as they are acquired from the refining influence of man upon man when each is bent on self-improvement. Something must be lacking where there is no ladies' society. This something is sacrificed by every man who takes a college course; and if he enter too young, it is a serious loss. But if a man has formed his manners and character we believe that he is all the better for his temporary removal from all distractions.

*E. M. Hopkins (Class of '88).*

### MY GRAVE.

FOR me no great metropolis of the dead,—  
 Highways and byways, squares and crescents of death,—  
 But, after I have breathed my last sad breath,  
 Am comforted with quiet, I who said,  
 "I weary of men's voices and their tread,  
 Of clamoring bells, and whirl of wheels that pass,"  
 Lay me beneath some plot of country grass,  
 Where flowers may spring, and birds sing overhead:

Whereto one coming, some fair eve in spring,  
 Between the day-fall and the tender night,  
 Might pause awhile, his friend remembering,  
 And hear low words breathed through the failing light,  
 Spoken to him by the wind, whispering,  
 "Now he sleeps long, who had so long to fight."

*Philip Bourke Marston.*

## OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP.

THE series of autobiographical articles published in *Lippincott's* during the past year or so will be permanently recognized as having more than a literary value. Making every allowance for illusions of memory and introspection, the truth remains that every thinking man knows more about himself than any one else does or ever will. To him, then, we turn, when he will let us, for the greater part of the data for explaining the development of his talent and the genesis of his artistic work. Behind our curiosity about those who instruct or thrill or please us, there is a sense of general laws which they illustrate. The influences that have made a writer and his writings must merit the attention of every one who cares at all for the panorama of man and the universe.

The facts thus coming to light confirm, now and then, rather curiously, the impressions left by the less personal utterances of these authors. For example, I have long had a feeling that Mr. Burroughs approached science through literature, while Dr. Abbott approached literature through science. This does not imply any disparagement of either of these charming writers. We are not concerned so much with the road a man takes as with where it takes him. Their present stand-point, if not precisely in common, is sufficiently so for our purposes, and one which greatly furthers our pleasure and profit.

In the absence of direct testimony, the internal evidence would need very careful sifting to justify the distinction,—if indeed it could be done. One might point to a more diffused enthusiasm on the part of our birch-browsing Rambler, equally at home by the Hudson and the Potomac; to a more distinct sense of bounds and localities, a greater need for exact measurement, careful record, and repeated corroborative experiment, on the part of the naturalist of the Delaware. But it is not easy to draw lines.

We may easily imagine Mr. Burroughs lying on the ice, lantern in hand, beside an air-hole to study the behavior of fish, till a mink came and nibbled at his heels by way of finding out what sort of creature was thus fooling away the hours of a winter night. With more difficulty we may see him perched day after day in the top branches of a tree, anxiously awaiting the moment when the wood duck should demonstrate her method, as an animated parachute, of letting her fluffy brood down to the water. We may even figure him climbing the tree to interview the mistaken wildcat, or swallowing a nest-full of bird-eggs, shells and all, in sudden panic. These scientific performances of the Trenton doctor are not sufficiently differentiated as science to be out of the reach of his fellow-essayist. But it would never have occurred to Mr. Burroughs to mark off an arbitrary territorial limit and confine his investigations thereto; nor do I believe that he would have persistently made an ant-lion unhappy in many different and highly instructive ways, nor taken the measure of the irritability and timidity of all the small birds around him with mirrors and mockeries of all sorts applied so as to yield something like quantitative psychological results. But in this line of argument one is perpetually afraid of refutation by opposed

instances. Only the feeling remains that, while both are sympathetic and both are accurate, the one even yet cares more for the sympathy and the other for the accuracy.

Now as to the facts. Mr. Burroughs, in the February *Lippincott's*, narrates how he first wrote essays, inspired by Johnson and Whipple, on "Revolutions" and kindred topics. Afterwards, in an essay on "Expression," he imitated Emerson. He adds, "It was mainly to break the spell of Emerson's influence and get upon ground of my own that I took to writing on out-door themes." Since other topics—for instance, folk-lore or anatomy—would have answered this purpose equally well, the choice which he made would seem to imply a special aptitude; but, after all, the fact remains that the main primary impulse was literary, and not scientific. He wrote about nature because of the desire to express his own individuality rather than because of any passion for collecting and classifying facts.

When we turn from origin to method, we meet with explanations such as this: "An experience must lie in my mind a certain time before I can put it upon paper,—say from three to six months. If there is anything in it, it will ripen and mellow in that time. I rarely take any notes, and I have a very poor memory, but rely on the affinity of my mind for a certain order of truths or observations."

Perhaps Mr. Burroughs would not wish to be called on to swear to the precise accuracy of every item which he has reported from "affinity" and "memory." But he is seldom caught tripping, for all that.

Dr. Abbott has not as yet unbosomed himself so directly and fully; but we know that he took careful notes of almost everything for years before doing any work which could fairly be termed literary, and that his second volume shows a decided advance, as to form, upon his first, though the matter is not in all instances more interesting.

Hence it seems pretty clear that my original supposition about the lines of mental advance of the two authors named, so curiously reaching middle ground from opposite points, is very well substantiated by what they tell us of their own methods and life-history.

W. H. Babcock.

MESSRS. J. Clayton Adams and Geo. P. Lathrop have lately been passing retaliatory compliments through the controversial monthlies at a rate which bids fair to leave little of the English language for common use. Barring the Lowell interview and the correspondence that followed, there has not been a livelier literary episode since the well-remembered rivalry in exhibiting Nathaniel Hawthorne in his intellectual underclothing to the gaze of a not wholly reverent world. But the words did not fly so recklessly then,—the noble figure of the great romancer being the only sufferer.

Not long ago a foreign member of that critic tribe whom Mr. Adams and Mr. Fawcett find so afflictive defined a literary man as "not merely a thin-skinned man, but a man with no skin at all." Perhaps a fiendish chuckle went with the words; but, again, perhaps he was ruefully recalling some experience of that skinless hypersensitiveness. If diabolical delight really do harbor in the critical soul, what a godsend such a spreading abroad of vulnerability and inflammatory nerves must be! After "pseudonymuncule," there is no hope for Mr. Adams, unless in the chemical records of the Patent Office. Some of the six-story Græco-German names for new compounds would do admirably as missiles,

being indeed fearfully and wonderfully made. But perhaps it would be wiser to commend to both parties a little evolution in the direction of good humor and "the years that bring the philosophic mind."

Does not the truth, the unexaggerated, unmitigated truth, lie somewhere between them? To the end of time, or of magazine-producing, there will be found self-consoling complainers who hug to their hearts the delusion of cast-iron "rings" surrounding most of the periodical speaking-trumpets which they vainly seek. It does no good to point out to such men that the prosperity of a publication, which involves the prosperity of its editor, demands the acceptance of that which in his judgment will give it the most influence or the largest circulation. How, then, can he afford to take what is markedly inferior in both respects, or to refuse that which he sees to excel very greatly? Even those who are most sceptical as to human probity commonly admit that a man may be trusted to act justly where it is conspicuously in the line of his interest. But the skinless one, disappointed and burning, is more unreasoning and implacable than the professional cynic.

On the other hand, editors are not angels, so far as we know; and it would not be in human nature to avoid some bias in favor of one who is known and liked, or against one who has shown himself a bore with vast capabilities of being disagreeable. Rhadamanthus himself could not exclude it; no, nor the infallible Pope of Rome. Does not Herbert Spencer, after cataloguing and elaborately providing against every sort of bias, give us unwittingly some first-class examples himself? Will no one have any mercy on the involuntary lopsidedness, the mild conscientious aberrations, of editorial gentlemen who do not claim to be attorneys-in-fact for the Deity, nor to carry encyclopædias in their heads?

WILL the gentle reader kindly give ear to an author's complaints? When I laid down my journalistic pen for a few weeks and wrote the novelette "Taken by Siege," I knew that I was courting criticism, but I did not object to this, as I expected to profit by it. But, alas! I have discovered that critics are not infallible. Take for example the criticism which appeared in the New York *Tribune*. The writer seems to think that the career of the young journalist hero, while not impossible, is highly improbable. Perhaps if it had been, as the *Tribune* says, accomplished in two years, it might be. Five years elapsed between the time Rush Hurlstone entered the office of *The Dawn* as a reporter and his appointment to the managing editorship. But this does not wound my hide as does the statement, "the knowledge of practical journalism possessed by the writer is clearly superficial and defective." This, after twenty years' experience as a practical journalist, is hard to bear. The faults of the book are many, but a want of truth to life is not one of them. Indeed, so closely do the incidents of the story follow the life that the author, who only conceals his name through modesty, greatly feared detection. In the entire story there is scarcely an incident that has not come within his personal knowledge.

*Author of "Taken by Siege."*



## BOOK-TALK.

A NUMBER of new books of poetry have been accumulating upon the Reviewer's desk. Several are by authors of established reputation, and they leave that reputation about where they found it. Celia Thaxter's "Cruise of the Mystery" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) presents her in the familiar light of the laureate of the sea, and especially of the sea that beats against the New England coast and encircles the Isle of Shoals; Nora Perry in her "New Songs and Ballads" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) continues her excursions into the delightful fairy-land of young-girlhood's imagination; Mrs. Elizabeth Akers in "The Silver Bridge, and other Poems" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) still aims at presenting the calmer, wiser, and sadder views of maturity and matronhood; Christopher Pearse Cranch in "Ariel and Caliban" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) is the same cultured, scholarly recluse we have known of yore, a sort of minor Longfellow, looking out upon the world of men through the medium of books, and so presenting a marked contrast to John Boyle O'Reilly, the greatest name on our list, whose "In Bohemia" (Pilot Publishing Co.) renews our acquaintance with the warm-blooded, high-minded, large-hearted Celt whose culture adds grace to his expression but does not fashion the mould of his thought.

Of the maiden volumes of verse on our list, the more noticeable are "Liber Amoris," by Henry Bernard Carpenter (Ticknor & Co.); "Post-Laureate Idylls, and other Poems," by Oscar Fay Adams (D. Lothrop & Co.); "The Old Garden, and other Poems," by Margaret Deland (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.); "Berries of the Brier," by Arlo Bates (Roberts Brothers); and "The Heart of the Weed," by an anonymous author (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.). It is curious that the only one of these that betrays any direct imitation of mightier voices is also the one that is instinct with the most vigorous personality. The blank verse of "Liber Amoris" might almost have been written by Tennyson, the lyrics by Shelley. But the author has a story to tell, and he tells it with forceful passion and pathos. The other books are all alike in the almost flawless perfection of their form. It is a pity that their authors have nothing to say,—they say it so admirably. Fifty years ago such beauty of expression would have been the gift only of the favored few who had a message to deliver. To-day the most difficult metres seem to lie within the reach of many sensitive and artistic minds. These minor singers all resemble one another; they differ from the minor singers of any other generation; through all their melodies the unmistakable note of the end of the nineteenth century can be heard: yet they suggest no obvious models. This paradox is explainable by the fact that the poems are a result of impartial study of all the models, and they bear, therefore, the same relation to these models that the composite photographs by which several men of striking individuality are reduced to a common and often commonplace type do to their originals.

Is this one of the signs of poetical decadence, this universal accomplishment of verse? What every one can do no one will care to do. There are other

signs which point if not to a decadence at least to an interregnum of poetry. Chief among these is the popular apathy to this form of literature. No one buys poetry nowadays,—a fact which may be brought home with startling insistence to the authors of all these pretty little fledglings of verse when their publishers' half-yearly statements come in. A novel which sells less than a thousand copies is a hopeless failure, a book of poems which sells more than a hundred scores a notable success. In a world where there is so much hewing of wood and drawing of water to be done, one cannot help asking whether it is worth while to spend laborious days upon trifles which at best will give a passing pleasure to the palates of a few literary epicures; and the very fact that we do apply such utilitarian tests shows that our reverence for poetry is on the wane. "There is a disposition in many persons just now," says Dr. Holmes, "to deny the poet his benefit of clergy, and to hold him no better than other people." We are apt to despise the cant which was once so popular and which represented the "marts of trade" as being very well for the vulgar but degrading to the higher intelligence. We are beginning to see something admirable in the intellect which brings vast commercial transactions to a successful issue or spans a continent with a railroad. Mr. Stedman is not often behind the age, but most readers would quarrel with him when he praises Poe for that "he never resorted to any mercantile employment for a livelihood," and adds that "there is something chivalrous in the attitude of one who never earned a dollar except by his pen." In the days of Byron it was thought chivalrous to refuse to earn a dollar with your pen, but the literary guild has long outgrown that affectation.

Another sign that seems to indicate the probable decay of poetry is the fact that among the few readers still left a majority are women. Now, women are the conservative element in society,—the element which holds fast to what it believes to be good long after the advance guard have decided that it has lost its virtue. In the advance guard itself, which of course we take to be the masculine contingent, many of the foremost spirits have given up their loyalty to poetry. Carlyle, for instance, openly denounced it as a semi-barbarous form of ornamenting thought, much like the ring in the nose of the savage, which must inevitably be abandoned in the onward march of intellect; Thackeray cannot hide a disposition to associate its practice with long hair and effeminate ways; and Howells's views on the subject have appeared so recently in *Harper's Magazine* as to need only a passing allusion.

One feels like retracting all these heresies in the face of such a book as Browning's "Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.). If the present be indeed the twilight of the poets, we may thank the fate which has placed us in the period when the splendors of the sunset are still aglow in the heavens. All that Browning seeks to convey in these "Parleyings" could no doubt have been put into prose, but it would as effectually have lost its diviner virtue as an opera recited instead of sung. The book is an extraordinary performance for a man who has passed his allotted threescore and ten years, not merely for its energy, its sonorousness, its profundity, but for the robust optimism which contrasts so pleasantly with the pessimism of Tennyson's old age. The main thesis of the book is indicated in the lyrical prologue, a dialogue between Apollo and the Fates, and is still more clearly defined in the epilogue, also a dialogue,—this time between John Fust (or Faust) and

his friends. Succinctly stated, the thesis is simply that life is an infinitely complex thing in which what we call good and what we call evil are so inextricably blended and intertwined that a mere shifting of position—a slight accession of knowledge—would make us alter the names by which we call them. As the Fates sing in the prologue,—

Known yet ignored, nor divined nor unguessed,  
Such is Man's law of life. Do we strive to declare  
What is ill, what is good in our spinning? Worst, best,  
Change hues of a sudden; now here and now there  
Flits the sign which decides; all about yet nowhere.

Yet though man stumble and fall, his path is ever upward and onward; though his reason be a taper and no torch, it will guide him from darkness into light. Though good and bad seem to be wrestling for the mastery, though we are too purblind to distinguish the good from the bad and often miscall them, yet good only can prevail. Though every note in the diapason must be struck, no matter how discordant it may seem, the final outcome will be harmony. This argument is clinched in the epilogue. Fust and his friends are exulting over the invention of the printing-press. Fust has been impelled to make this invention by the hope that in placing so powerful an engine for the propagation of truth in the hands of the Church he may purchase exemption for his sins. So that it is in a measure true that to his sins, to his selfish and ignoble fear, and to his superstition, the world owes this inestimable boon. But Fust's joy is dashed by the thought that the same aid given by his invention to the Church will be given also to its enemies. The entire passage is worth quoting, for it is pregnant of meaning:

## FUST.

Ah, friends, the fresh triumph soon flickers, fast fades!  
I hailed Word's dispersion: could heart-leaps but tarry!  
Through me does Print furnish Truth wings? The same aids  
Cause Falsehood to range just as widely. What raids  
On a region undreamed of does Printing enable  
Truth's foe to effect: Printed leasing and lies  
May speed to the world's farthest corner—gross fable  
No less than pure fact—to impede, neutralize,  
Abolish God's gift and Man's gain!

## FIRST FRIEND.

Dost surmise  
What struck me at first blush? Our Beghards, Waldenses,  
Jeronimites, Hussites—does one show his head,  
Spout heresy now? Not a priest in his senses  
Deigns answer mere speech, but piles fagots instead,  
Refines as by fire, and, him silenced, all's said.  
Whereas if in future I pen an opuscle  
Defying retort, as of old when rash tongues  
Were easy to tame—straight some knave of the Huss-School  
Prints answer forsooth! Stop invisible lungs?  
The barrel of blasphemy broached once, who bungs?

## SECOND FRIEND.

Does my sermon, next Easter, meet fitting acceptance?  
Each captious disputative boy has his quirk

"*An cuique credendum sit?*" Well, the Church kept "ans"

In order till Fust set his engine at work!

What trash will come flying from Jew, Moor, and Turk

When, goose-quill, thy reign o'er the world is abolished!

Goose—ominous name! With a goose woe began:

Quoth Huss—which means "goose" in his idiom unpolished—

"Ye burn now a Goose: there succeeds me a Swan

Ye shall find quench your fire!"

FUST.

I foresee such a man.

And so the epilogue and the book conclude. The poet seems to imply that it is in what these short-sighted people call the evils of the press that its real benefits to mankind will accrue, that its choicest boon will prove the very aid to heresy which they deplore, for in that heresy lies the germ of all future progress. Of course the lesson has a wider application to all apparent evils which may be blessings in disguise. The first of the Parleyings proper is with Bernard Mandeville, author of the "Fable of the Bees," and the aim of it is to show how Mandeville's favorite doctrine, that evil is a necessary spur to action, without which human progress were impossible, can be harmonized with the higher doctrine that in the end good must conquer evil, and that evil is hateful, good adorable. The second is with Daniel Bartoli, the Jesuit, and historian of the Society of Jesus. A test-case is suggested for discussion. A poor but noble-hearted girl gives up her ducal lover when she finds that his marriage with her would entail a sacrifice of power and what she regards as a betrayal of trust. The woman's saintship is conceded, yet it is shown what mixed results followed this act which men must applaud as heroic. The girl marries a man many years her junior and soon dies, the duke with a sort of bastard constancy never marries, but wrecks his life in the arms of mistresses.

One leans to like the duke, too: up we'll patch  
Some sort of saintship for him—not to match  
Hers—but man's best and woman's worst amount  
So nearly to the same thing, that we count  
In man a miracle of faithfulness  
If, while unfaithful somewhat, he lay stress  
On the main fact that love, when love indeed,  
Is wholly solely love from first to last—  
Truth—all the rest a lie.

So Thackeray found something ghastly and grotesque yet not utterly ignoble in the little Dutch boor George II. kneeling at the feet of his dying wife and blubbering out, in answer to her advice to marry again, "*Non, non: j'aurai des matresses.*" The third Parleying is with Christopher Smart, a hack-author who amid a mass of dreary rubbish produced one inspired poem, the "Song to David." Here we are shown how closely allied are genius and commonplace. In the meanest human soul the divine spark lies latent, and a mere accident (in Smart's case the apparent degradation of madness) may brush aside the obstruction. The fourth Parleying, with George Bubb Dodington, teaches that there is such a thing as absolute evil, shameless, self-confessed, unredeemed, and recognizable by all men, which no shifting of light can alter into even seeming good. The fifth Parleying, with Francis Furini, is an apology for Zolaism, as the sixth, with Gerard de Lairese, is for realism. The poet refuses to believe the current story

that Furini, who was both priest and painter, begged on his death-bed that his studies in nude art should be destroyed. Lairese is praised for seeing the beauty that lay behind the commonplace. A fool's wonder is raised only by the extraordinary, a wise man wonders at the ordinary. The final Parleying is with Charles Avison, the English musician, the moot question being as to the immortality of great art. Fashions and modes of thinking change, the masses are no longer influenced by what swayed their predecessors, nevertheless beauty and power still lurk in forgotten masterpieces and reveal themselves to him who can divorce his soul from the fashion of the moment.

It is true, perhaps, that Browning's obscurity detracts from his value as a poet. The highest art should be intelligible to all. Shakespeare's dramas crowd both the pit and the gallery. Raphael's Madonnas have endeared themselves to people who never heard Raphael's name. But whatever be the final verdict as to Browning's rank as a poet, he is beyond all question a great thinker, a great philosopher. His poems repay the hard study you have to bestow upon them, especially if you keep your self-love from being unduly influenced by any pride you may feel in solving the difficult problems he presents.

There has lately been published on the other side of the Atlantic a little book called "Canada's Poet" (London, Field & Tuer), which is the most delightful piece of unconscious humor that has appeared since "English as She is Spoke." The author is James Gay. He signs himself "Poet Laureate of Canada and Master of All Poets," and, according to an Introduction by James Millington, the labored wit of which contrasts unfavorably with the spontaneity of Mr. Gay's, he was born in 1810, and is still living in Canada. No better sample of his peculiar powers could be given than the following:

*The brightest of Poets have passed away.  
Never a one of them composed on the Elephant and the Flea,  
At last it's composed by the Poet James Gay.*

#### THE ELEPHANT AND THE FLEA.

Between those two there's a great contrast,  
The elephant is slow, the flea very fast,  
You can make friends with the elephant and gain his good-will,  
If you have a flea in your bed you cannot lie still:  
A flea is a small thing, all times in the way.  
Hopping and jumping like beasts after their prey,  
Oft drop inside your ears—don't think this a wonder,  
You will think for a while it's loud claps of thunder:  
We can make friends with all beasts ever came in our way—  
No man on earth can make friends with a flea;  
The elephant is a large beast, and cunning no doubt;  
If you offend him, look out for his snout;  
Give him tobacco, it will make him ugly and cross,  
A blow from his trunk's worse than a kick from a horse;  
And still they are friendly, will cause no disaster,  
Beg around in shows, make money for their master:  
On this noble beast, the elephant, I have no more to say;  
And this little black insect will have its own way.  
A flea you may flatten if you know how,  
But an elephant no man can't serve so anyhow.  
One thing seems wonderful to your poet, James Gay—  
All beasts and little animals seem to have a cunning way;



Just like the whales at sea, they seem to know their foes,  
Upsets their boats in a moment, and down they goes.

Of course, fully to enjoy the fun of this sort of thing the reader must keep in mind that the poems are written in perfect good faith, and that their author is serious in believing himself the equal of "Dr. C. L. Alfred Tennyson," to whom he has dedicated his book, with the delicate suggestion, "Now Longfellow is gone there are only two of us left. There ought to be no rivalry between us two."

Another book of poems, widely dissimilar in other respects, but bearing the same delightful flavor of unconscious humor, is E. A. Warriner's "I Am That I Am" (Cupples, Upham & Co.), which the title-page describes as a metrical essay on the philosophic basis of the Christian faith. The first stanza of Canto I. runs as follows:

In Being are included all that are,  
And were, and will be—subject, adjective,  
And predicate—each plural, singular;  
For though but One, yet in it all must live—  
Modes, tenses, numbers, persons. We derive  
From the To Be the That I Am, and thence  
All parts of speech, each verb infinitive;  
For the To Be means Substance, Action, Sense;  
And That I Am is of the To Be full evidence.

There are over four hundred stanzas of this sort of thing. It may be excellent metaphysics, but it is hard to understand how a person of the scholarly attainments which Mr. Warriner evidences should have chosen so extraordinary a medium for presenting the thoughts which, as he tells us, he has "from childhood sought with passionate desire." He may in future find appropriate exercise for his poetic gifts in turning the higher mathematics, or Coke upon Littleton, into Spenserian stanzas.

Of the other poetry upon the Reviewer's table at least a score of volumes have absolutely no reason for being. The lines scan, the rhymes are monotonously good. That is all. Would that you could flay a poet alive without hurting him! Was it not Descartes who held that all animals were automata, and whose disciples tortured dogs and cats under the idea that they could not hurt them? These poets have all the external signs of automata. Yet the Reviewer will stay his hand. He will not even mention their names. And thus he may spare them the worst punishment of all,—that of reading one another's verses.

"Our Arctic Province," by Henry W. Elliott (Charles Scribner's Sons), is a handsome octavo volume, giving much information about Alaska and the Seal Islands, their topographical features, their resources, the manners and customs of the various savage or semi-civilized tribes that inhabit them, and other information that might be useful in summing up the present and prospective value of our northwestern province. The illustrations are by the author. They are drawn from nature, but, like the text which they illustrate, they aim rather at use than at beauty. Altogether the book is a valuable work of reference, but it would be tough reading for one who has no special interest in the subject. Solomon Bulkeley Griffin's "Mexico of To-Day" (Harper & Brothers), on the other hand, would awake an interest where none had been already felt. It is vivid, sketchy, and entertaining, it can be read through at a sitting, but it has no permanent value.

CURRENT NOTES.

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THE recent action of the Philadelphia American Society for the Prevention of Adulteration of Food, Drugs, and Medicines, in bringing together in a National Convention the varying interests and individual forces that are working for the suppression of the present direful traffic in impure food, etc., with a view to the greater effectiveness which a combined action will insure, had in it great possibilities of good to humanity. It has come to pass that our marts are filled with highly-adulterated food, drink, and drugs, which are sold side by side with pure articles of the same name and appearance, without mark to indicate their character. There can be no question but the public are both swindled commercially and injured physically by these adulterated and sophisticated articles, and action toward their suppression cannot be too pointed or speedy. The administration of State laws, although they exist in several States of sufficient scope and severity, seems to be ineffectual. Either the mass of the voters are not sufficiently in sympathy with the laws, or the offenders are in too close relationship with the officials, so that it is evident that the public must be protected, if by law, from a source not yet invoked.

The movement toward a national law, as inaugurated by the Convention, is doubtless in the proper direction. A law is proposed that shall prohibit the manufacture, sale, or transportation of adulterated or sophisticated articles of food, drink, and drugs. The objections to a reliance upon this action alone for a remedy arise from the fact that the opposition of interested parties, and particularly from the transportation companies whose business will be seriously interfered with, will be such as greatly to delay if not altogether defeat it. While legislation should be sought and obtained for the future and as speedily as possible, the public must be indebted for present relief to something more prompt, and this will doubtless come, as so many of our public blessings always come, from private enterprise.

We believe that the quickest and most effective way to break up the trade in adulterated food is by public exposure. Let the articles and their makers be pilloried in the public press, and neither will long remain to molest the public. This remedy will cut like a two-edged sword: in making the business odious it will discourage production, and in warning the consumer of the fraud it will cut off the market.

A notable example of the effectiveness of this method may be remembered in the case of the adulterated baking powders. A few years ago the entire community was startled by the exposure made by the Royal Baking Powder Company of New York, of the fact that large quantities of alum baking powders were upon the market and in daily use. The names of the poisonous articles and their manufacturers were published. A whirlwind of public excitement followed, but the alum baking powder was doomed.

It may be said that it should not be necessary for the individual to incur the large expense and danger of bodily harm involved in the performance of such

purely police work as this. Undoubtedly true; and yet the labor was probably not without its corresponding advantages. The Royal Company could not have afforded to make these bold charges and exposures had there been a single vulnerable point about its methods or its goods for its enemies to attack. In thus throwing down the gauntlet the public understood at once that its goods must be perfectly pure and of the highest quality, and custom was transferred to it and it reaped a corresponding profit,—although, however much the benefit to these manufacturers may have been, to the public, from the exposure of the poisonous adulterations and the consequent protection of health, it was a hundredfold greater. There must be at least one manufacturer in each class of articles subject to these large adulterations who possesses the boldness to expose the charlatans by whom he is surrounded. He will certainly find his reward.

Whatever else may be urged by the gentlemen to whom the matter was left by the National Convention, we are confident that legislation either by Congress or the States which stimulates a public exposure will go farthest toward effecting the most laudable object they have in view.

It is very gratifying to the managers of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* to note the success which has attended their experiment of publishing a complete novel with every number. A most substantial form of encouragement has been awarded them in a large increase in the number of purchasers and subscribers; but over and above this they take pride in the good words that have greeted their enterprise. The series of novels to which this (April) number furnishes the sixth have all been by authors of note, and have worthily upheld their reputation. The majority, indeed, have been the masterpieces of their respective authors. "Brueton's Bayou," for instance, is considered the best of Habberton's works by such journals as the *New York Tribune*, *Life*, the *London Academy*, etc. The following good words from the *Academy* are worth quoting: "No one can feel any uncertainty about Mr. Habberton's powers; for in originality of motive, in freshness of treatment, and in a winning pathetic grace which is not a mere ornament of the story but is wrought into its very fabric, *Brueton's Bayou* stands alone among recent novels. Having used the word pathetic, it may be well to say that Mr. Habberton's story is not a melancholy one, its pathos being not the pathos of sorrow but of sheer beauty." "Miss Defarge" has been called one of the best of Mrs. Burnett's shorter novels, and anything from the hand of a genius like Mrs. Burnett is, of course, valuable. "Sinfire" occupies the front rank in Julian Hawthorne's work. Walt Whitman told the editor of *Lippincott's Magazine* that he began reading it in the evening and could not lay it down until he had finished it, long after his regular hour for retiring. He considers "Sinfire" far superior to anything else of Mr. Hawthorne's that he has ever seen. Miss McClelland's "A Self-Made Man" was hailed as a distinct advance upon "Oblivion" and "Princess," the two books which placed that brilliant young writer among the leading novelists of America. It is too early, of course, to obtain any consensus of criticism upon "Kenyon's Wife" in our last number and "Douglas Duane" in the present, but the authors of both assure the editor that they have spent unusual care and thought upon these works and look upon them as ranking with their very best performances.

"CATHEDRAL DAYS," by Anna Bowman Dodd, is the record of a trip through

Southern England, in places little frequented by tourists, told with so much fascination of style that the reader seems to share the delightful journey with the travellers. One of our foremost critics says of Mrs. Dodd, "She is, of all the women I know, the most thoroughly educated and accomplished,—one of our ablest writers on literature, art, music, etc. I have looked over her descriptive record of a tour among the southern cathedral towns of England, and find it very charming." Fully illustrated. Price, \$2.00. Roberts Brothers, Publishers, Boston.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE acts as a tonic for the stomach and nervous system. Its specific use is to improve the nutrition of the nervous system. It is also indicated in all pains and inflammations. Wherever the nervous system is obliged to spend its force and energy, the true remedy is acid phosphate. The greater the wear and tear the more necessary is it to supply nerve food. It is a remedy of the highest value in dyspepsia, sick headache, mental and physical exhaustion, nervousness, diminished vitality, neuralgia, and debility in nursing women. Physicians have used it with unqualified satisfaction. The utmost reliance can be placed upon it, for it is without an equal in the treatment of all nervous diseases.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON, the poet, died in the beginning of last February, at the early age of thirty-seven. The sonnet "My Grave" which appears in this number of *Lippincott's Magazine* is pathetically appropriate. Evidently it voices a real wish. It is interesting to note that it was one of the last things that proceeded from his pen. Mr. Marston, it will be remembered, was blind from early youth, and he keenly felt his affliction. He is the hero of "Philip my King," one of the most admired poems of Mrs. Dinah Muloch Craik, his god-mother.

"TIS NOTHING BUT AN ADVERTISEMENT.—WHO CARES TO READ IT?—The public are under the impression that it is the common practice of many proprietors of Patent Medicines to manufacture their testimonials and interviews as well as goods, and often one is about as reliable and as near the truth of their representations as the other.

As an instance *à propos* of this, it was related that in a large city recently an Advertising Agent was visited by one of the proprietors of a new bottled remedy, with a peculiar trade-mark, and offered a large advertisement, to insert in a number of papers over the country. The advertisement contained many astonishing testimonials, signed with names having long, high-sounding titles appended to them.

\* The Advertising Agents asked if these testimonials were *bona fide*, and would the persons named answer a letter written to them?

"Oh, no," was the reply; "they are fictitious, as all such testimonials are. But that makes no difference; we are responsible for that, and are willing to pay your price for your work according to contract."

"No, sir; we do not do that kind of business."

"Why, sirs, you advertise for a popular firm in this city who protect their goods by their trade-mark!"

"That is very true; but we know that every testimonial they offer and we publish is genuine, and the writers can be reached and their statements can all be verified."

So it is true of Drs. Starkey & Palen. There is not a testimonial published by that firm, or caused to be printed by them, but what was written by the patient, or for them by their relative or friend, as represented by the testimonial; and this truth is easily substantiated by writing to the firm of Drs. Starkey & Palen and requesting the name and post-office address of the writer of any particular testimonial. The following were written by the well-known editor of the *New South*, published at Birmingham, Alabama, who can vouch for their correctness:

"BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, November 1, 1886.

"DEAR SIRS:—People who are afflicted with disease and are disposed to resort to your great remedy naturally desire to know if its cures are lasting.

"In my own case, my experience is very satisfactory. I had *dyspepsia* for over ten years, which for six years degenerated into a most painful and distressing form. I could get no relief from the usual remedies, but was *permanently restored to health* by one month's use of the Oxygen.

"Mr. C. A. Gibson, of Aberdeen, Miss., was induced by me some two years ago to use Compound Oxygen. He had for several years suffered from *catarrh, headache, etc.*, and was greatly reduced in health and strength. He found speedy relief and permanent cure. I am told that he is to-day the very picture of good health.

"My brother had some years ago a severe attack of *asthma*. It returned every fall, and for two months or more he suffered severely. In September last he was again attacked, but resorted to the Oxygen treatment, and in two weeks was completely relieved.

"Another instance of the wonderful remedial power of Compound Oxygen will, I hope, go far towards satisfying public confidence in it. Mr. E. B. Ward, one of the oldest citizens of Columbus, Miss., has for more than thirty years been a sufferer from *rheumatic gout* in its most painful form. He was subject to attacks which confined him to his bed for months, and for weeks at a time suffered the most excruciating pain. During one of these attacks, in July last, when he had given up all hope, and frequently said that death was preferable to such a life of pain and suffering, I induced him to use Compound Oxygen, and with very fine effect. He improved quite rapidly, and was soon relieved from pain. He was able to sleep at night, and his appetite returned.

"The disease may not be extirpated from his system, but he has been wonderfully benefited, and is to-day one of the most enthusiastic believers in and advocates of Compound Oxygen in our country."

ONE of the most famous women in America at present is Mrs. James Brown Potter; and her book "My Recitations" is one of the best-selling books of the season, not only because its author's name is a household word in our midst, but also because she is known to be the best of American lady elocutionists, and a collection of pieces which have obtained her approval must be a valuable one to all readers, either amateur or professional.

"FRANKLIN IN FRANCE," by Edward Everett Hale, is a distinct addition to American history. Says a competent authority, "I am greatly obliged to you for your most important contribution to our knowledge of Franklin. Your volume shows that you agree with me in the opinion that whatever attracts readers to Franklin's writings and to the study of his public career is a benefaction to humanity . . . We can never have too much from the pen of a man who never



wrote a dull line or a foolish one. . . I have read it with the greatest satisfaction."—(John Bigelow, editor of "The Works of Franklin," to Mr. Hale.) George Bancroft, the historian, also endorses it: "Early this morning I received your delicious book on Franklin, and have spent the day in reading it. You have brought together a great mass of things new and instructive and exceedingly pleasant to read. It takes a person who is familiar with the subject of your studies and the times to know how much of what you have brought forward was unpublished." Price, \$3.00. Roberts Brothers, Publishers, Boston.

THE recent appearance of a new edition of "Worcester's Unabridged Quarto Dictionary," to which have been added a pronouncing biographical dictionary of upward of twelve thousand personages and a pronouncing gazetteer of the world noting and locating over twenty thousand places, will probably open again the battle of the dictionaries.

While some dictionaries, by extensive advertising and work that has secured endorsements of State Superintendents and State Legislators, have reached a large circulation, Worcester has been and is now considered the *standard* dictionary of the English language by the most eminent scholars and authors of America, and is rapidly finding its way into the homes and schools of our country.

The best endorsements of a dictionary are those that come from the best writers and educators. Worcester has these endorsements. For in the making of his great work he followed no idiosyncrasies of his own, but the orthography and pronunciation of the best authors and scholars.

Dr. McCosh, President of Princeton College, under date of January 21, 1887, says, "Worcester's Dictionary, so well known, needs no commendation from me. Its value has been increased by an Appendix containing later words."

A. S. Hill, of Harvard College, under date of January 29, 1887, says, "I have always used Worcester's, and have regarded it as the highest authority on orthography."

Edward Everett Hale, who stands in the front rank of literary men, says under date of January 6, 1887, "I find Worcester's large Dictionary the most convenient for use, and by far the best authority known to me as to the present use of the English language."

James Russell Lowell, scholar, poet, and diplomat, under date of January 27, 1887, says, "I could not easily be reconciled to any other dictionary."

Franklin Carter, President of Williams College, says, "I regard it as authority that cannot be surpassed in matters of orthography and pronunciation."

T. B. Aldrich, author and poet, says, "I have always regarded Worcester's Dictionary as the best in the English language."

George William Smith, President of Trinity College, Hartford, says, "Worcester's Dictionary has always been a favorite, because it answered my purpose the best of any of the many dictionaries."

Rev. Phillips Brooks's testimony is, "To possess the work in its present completeness is to be well equipped indeed."

In a letter dated January 5, 1887, Edgar Fawcett writes, "I have held Worcester's Dictionary in the highest esteem, and now to possess this admirably improved edition of his work is in every way a delight. Worcester was a great philologist, and I sincerely congratulate the publishers upon the valuable

addenda which have been made to his noble book. I fancy that his ghost must now be thanking them."

A. R. Spofford, Librarian of Congress, said that "when proofs from the Congressional Printing-Office at Washington embody the innovations upon English orthography which another dictionary introduced, they are invariably returned with corrections restoring the established spelling, as represented by Worcester and the usage of all great English writers."

Major Ben: Perley Poore, Clerk of the Committee of the Congressional Records, and others at Washington, we are informed, do the same.

The Hon. Charles Sumner said it was "the best authority," and for years before his death carried a copy of the pocket edition in his hip-pocket.

The London *Athenæum*, probably the ablest critical paper printed in the English tongue, has said that it is "the best existing English lexicon," and all the leading magazines and newspapers of this country publicly recommend it and adopt it as the standard authority.

This great work will ever remain a credit to American scholarship and a monument to its author's learning and industry.

So much interest is now being taken in horseback-riding that the publication of "RIDING FOR LADIES," by Mrs. Power O'Donoghue, is very opportune. It is a collection of useful and practical hints on matters that pertain to the horse and his management. The instructions given are of the plainest and easiest description, and are the result of an experience which has in some instances been dearly bought. Price, \$3.50. Roberts Brothers, Publishers, Boston.

It is a curious coincidence that simultaneously with the appearance of *Lippincott's* for March, containing Barnet Phillips's charming story, "Was it Worth While?" the following paragraph should have been set afloat in American newspapers:

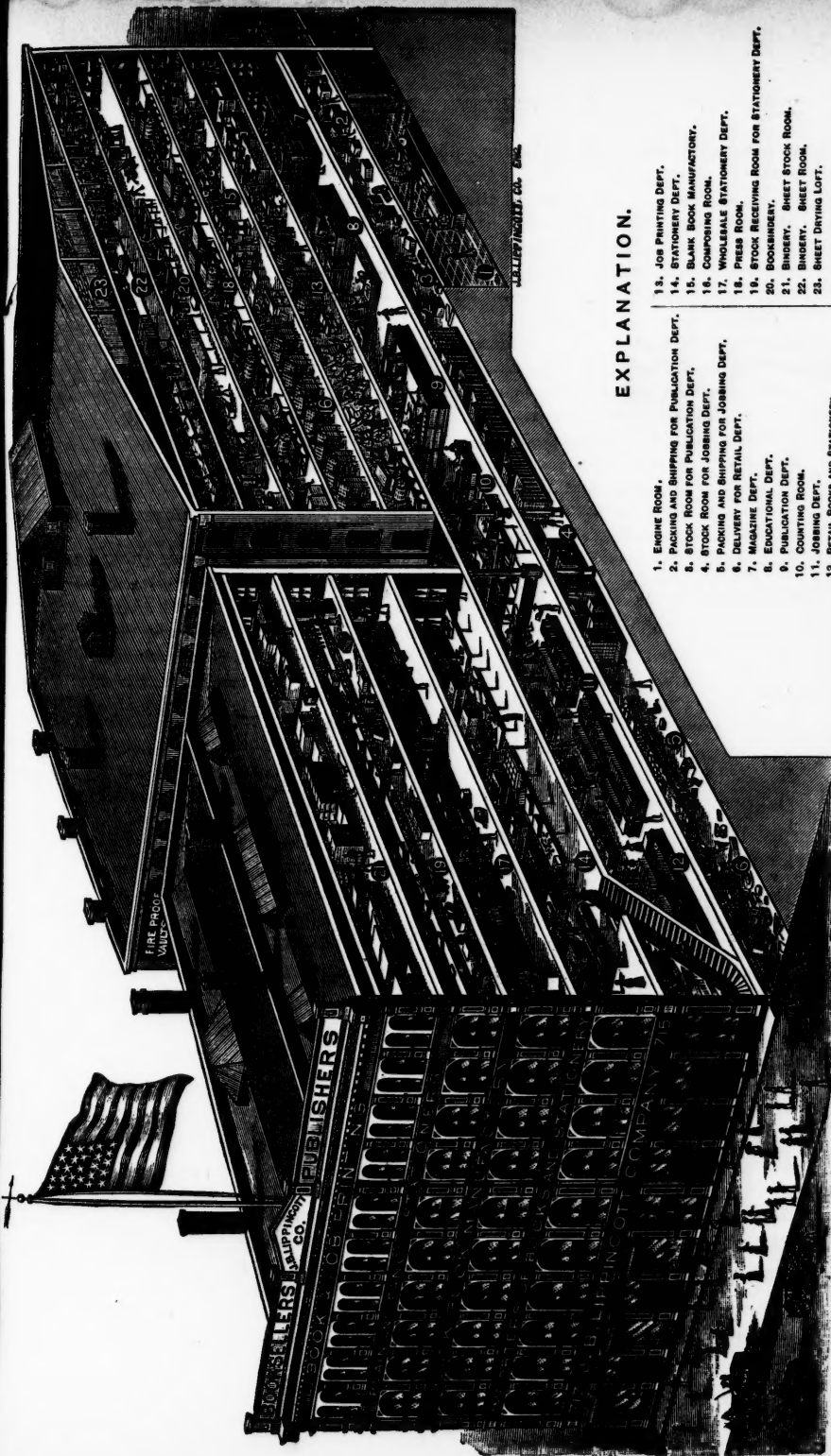
"The first copy of the original edition of 'The Letters of Columbus,' in Latin, printed in 1493, the year after the discovery of America, was recently sold in Cologne for 6600 marks (\$1650), said to be the highest price ever paid for a single book in Germany."

Mr. Phillips's story, it will be remembered, turned upon the hero's discovery of a copy of this famous book.

"SOME CHINESE GHOSTS," by Lafcadio Hearn, is a collection of a half-dozen legends culled from the realm of Cathayan story. The style has such grace and finish that it is charming, and the imagination is fresh and wholly original. This little gem is sure to have a permanent setting in American literature. Price, \$1.00. Roberts Brothers, Publishers, Boston.

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.—The illustration accompanying this article gives the reader a somewhat impressive representation—though merely a bird's-eye glance, as it were—of the great industrial establishment of J. B. Lippincott Company, which in its reorganized form, now just entering upon the third year of its existence as a joint-stock company, shows abundant evidence of possessing all the old-time vitality and enterprise that in years past rendered the concern of which this is the outgrowth so famous.

Following the steps of the ingenious artist of our illustration in his progress through the different departments of the establishment, our course leads us first



# EXPLANATION.

1. ENGINE ROOM.
2. PACKING AND SHIPPING FOR PUBLICATION DEPT.
3. STOCK ROOM FOR PUBLICATION DEPT.
4. STOCK ROOM FOR JOBSING DEPT.
5. PACKING AND SHIPPING FOR JOBSING DEPT.
6. DELIVERY FOR RETAIL DEPT.
7. MAGAZINE DEPT.
8. EDUCATIONAL DEPT.
9. PUBLICATION DEPT.
10. COUNTING ROOM.
11. JOBSING DEPT.
12. RETAIL BOOKS AND STATIONERY.
13. JOB PRINTING DEPT.
14. STATIONERY DEPT.
15. BLANK BOOK MANUFACTORY.
16. COMPOSING ROOM.
17. WHOLESALE STATIONERY DEPT.
18. PRESS ROOM.
19. STOCK RECEIVING ROOM FOR STATIONERY DEPT.
20. BOOKBINDERY.
21. BINDERY. SHEET STOCK ROOM.
22. BINDERY. SHEET STOCK ROOM.
23. SHEET DRYING LOFT.

SECTIONAL VIEW OF J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY'S PUBLISHING HOUSE,  
715 and 717 Market St., and 714, 716, 718, and 720 Filbert St., Philadelphia.

to a subterranean region under the Filbert Street front of the building, where, surrounded by boxes of old stereotype plates and much obsolete paraphernalia, a grimy Guebre, by the aid of powerful boilers, engines, and electric-light plants, dispenses heat, light, and motive-power to the different rooms of the concern. We linger not here, the surroundings displease us, but a few steps upward and we come to the basement floor of the establishment, three hundred and sixty-five by forty-five feet in extent, divided into various sections for some of the heavier operations of the business, such as the receipt of goods from abroad, the packing and shipping from the jobbing and publication departments, and at times the package-delivery of the sales at retail. Here also are arranged, on shelves appropriately labelled, stores of the current school-books of the different publishers of the United States, with much miscellaneous stock of paper-bound books and other of the less expensive sort. Fifty incandescent electric lights, supplemented by twice that number of gas-burners, illuminate this wareroom. Easy flights of stairs lead from this basement to the first floor proper, which is the chief attraction for strangers as well as for persons engaged in the trade. The spacious front store, extending nearly two hundred feet from the Market Street doors to the offices near the centre of the whole area, is largely devoted to the retail and jobbing departments. Books in all styles of binding and at all prices here greet the eye, from the twenty-five-cent ephemera of the cheap Libraries to elegantly-bound standard works, often of choice editions. Of these latter we note a set of Addison's Works, Bohn's edition, in six volumes, annotated by Dr. Richard Hurd, Lord Bishop of Worcester, "three-quarters calf binding," and Ainsworth's Novels, in sixteen volumes, "with numerous illustrations on steel and wood, by Cruikshank, 'Phiz,' and Johannot." Alison's 'History of Europe, printed from 1849 to 1859, "in 23 vols., with fine steel portraits and Index" (so runs the legend), holds itself in quiet reserve, waiting for some appreciative purchaser. Arabian Entertainments for a whole "One Thousand and One Nights," illustrated by many hundred engravings on wood from original designs by William Harvey, offer themselves in three volumes, printed in 1844. To the devoutly inclined (and what book-lover is not more or less so?), Bida's Four Gospels, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, "illustrated with 132 full-page etched plates on India paper," is offered; also Dalziel's Bible Gallery, illustrations from drawings by Sir F. Leighton, Maddox Brown, Poynter, Burne Jones, Watts, Dalziel, Holman Hunt, etc. Lodge's Portraits of Illustrious Personages of Great Britain, two hundred and forty-five in number, on India paper (large-paper copy), waits to be taken; and Lubke's History of Art, in tree calf, the London edition of 1874, and John Chalonier Smith's Mezzotinto Portraits, 125 in number, offer special attractions to those interested in art. Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson can be had in three volumes, nicely dressed in tree calf, or in five volumes, three-quarters morocco. A set of Chalmers's British Essayists, that "long series of periodical works," says Sir Walter Scott, "which, from the days of Addison to those of Mackenzie, have enriched our literature with so many effusions of genius, humor, wit, and learning," in thirty-eight volumes full calf, printed away back in 1823, is offered as a fit companion to a set of the British Poets, which is also here exhibited, in fifty-two volumes, half calf. Coleridge's Works, in twenty-six volumes, the outcome of (as De Quincey says) "the largest and most spacious intellect, the subtlest and most comprehensive, that has yet appeared among men," may here be seen, along with Dickens's Works, standard edition, in thirty volumes, in various styles of bind-

ing. Here also are Hawthorne's complete works, in twelve volumes, beautifully bound, "in three-quarters calf," and the complete works of Charles Lever, in seventeen volumes, "in red bound levant." A fine copy of Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley Novels*, the so-called "Abbotsford Edition," in twelve volumes, tree calf binding, with one hundred and twenty engravings on steel and over two thousand woodcuts, attracts the eye, along with a copy of the First Edition of the entire works of Walter Scott, "Novels, Tales, Poems, etc.," with *Life by Lockhart*, the whole in one hundred volumes. These are, however, but a tithe of what may be seen, much of which is recounted in an elegant catalogue of rare and choice English books, which "may be had on application." A bird's-eye view of the stock packed upon the shelves and counters requires all the ocular power of a far-sighted person, and to mention the name of a book not to be found here would not be an easy thing for a bibliomaniac to do. The store itself is a model of beauty and convenience, and the books are arranged in a manner to attract the eye even of the casual observer.

The offices and counting-room occupy a space midway between the Market Street and Filbert Street fronts; and here are concocted those *brainy* schemes that maintain the establishment in the first rank of the publishing business. Here the plan for acquiring the famous series of Worcester's Dictionaries had its birth, resulting in rescuing those excellent works from the *noxious* desuetude into which they had fallen and placing them anew within the reach of an appreciative public. Here, too, were planned those elegant art works, the illustrated "Lamia" and the illustrated "American Figure Painters," which for two successive seasons have easily held the front rank among American holiday publications. Neath a perfect skylight, on the walls of the counting-room, hang the originals of these works of art, forming no insignificant picture-gallery.

Passing the counting-room towards the Filbert Street front, we meet the working bureaus of the Publication and Book-Importing Departments, surrounded by the thousands of volumes which emanate from the presses of this concern and of their foreign correspondents. Here stands a pyramid of *Waverley Novels* in half a dozen or more different editions of from six to forty-eight volumes, in all styles of binding; there as many editions of *Shakespeare's Works*, in from one to a dozen or more volumes. Thackeray's Works in several editions of from ten to twenty-six volumes, Carlyle's Works in about twenty volumes, George Eliot's Works in from eight to twenty volumes, and Dickens's Works in from seven to thirty volumes, are among the most important books of British print that here meet the eye of the visitor, while of the product of the home presses Bulwer's Novels in from twenty-five to forty-seven volumes, Prescott's Histories in fifteen volumes, Mrs. A. L. Wister's novels, now numbering nearly thirty, and Ouida's Works in twenty-four uniform volumes, are among the most popular of their class. Stacks of those ponderous works of reference, "Worcester's Quarto Dictionary of the English Language," "Allibone's Dictionary of Authors," "Lippincott's Pronouncing Biographical Dictionary," "Lippincott's Pronouncing Gazetteer of the World," "Chambers's Encyclopædia," and "Thomas's Pronouncing Medical Dictionary," find here a temporary resting-place between the bindery and the hand of the purchaser. Here, too, at the Filbert Street front, are located the Educational Department and the Advertising Bureau of the concern, and here at the elevator are received the tons on tons of paper, imported sheets, and other heavy freights. Flights of stairs from this point lead to the several rooms of the manufacturing department, one above the other, "like



Ossa piled on Pelion," until we reach the seventh floor from the sub-basement. First, on the second floor, we come to the home of *Lippincott's Magazine*, occupying a room some twenty-five by one hundred and fifty feet in extent, opposite and above which are situated the book- and job-printing offices of the concern, perhaps the most thoroughly equipped rooms of the kind in the country. Here, besides the production of the choicest specimens of the printer's art (of which a specialty is made), are printed and distributed to subscribers, in addition to "*Lippincott's Magazine*" and the well-known "*Medical Times*," several other periodicals, such as "*The Therapeutic Gazette*," "*The Pennsylvania Magazine*" (for the Historical Society of Pennsylvania), "*The Church Magazine*," "*Archives of Pediatrics*," "*The American Naturalist*," "*The American Journal*," etc. Some thirty printing-presses and, at times, a hundred and fifty or more hands are employed in these rooms. From the printing-office the sheets are carried by elevators to the sixth story for drying, after which they are passed through the hydraulic press to give them that smoothness and finish which otherwise would be impossible after the surface is disturbed by printing. Here, then begins the binding proper, and the terms *folding, gathering, sewing, forwarding, marbling, casing, finishing*, etc., mark the successive processes, each contributed by different artisans, through which a volume passes in its course from the printing-press to the hand of the reader.

Other departments of this mammoth concern are the blank-book manufactory and stock-room, located respectively on the third and second floors, where huge masses of unruled paper and other raw material are converted into millions of books for accountants' uses. A room some fifty feet by one hundred, where can be found everything in the blank-book way, from the simple every-day "pass-book" to the most elaborate bank ledger, affords the best of facilities for the purchaser to select his stock. Convenient bridge-like passages connect these manufacturing rooms with the Stationery Department at the Market Street front of the concern, where, in spacious rooms, one above the other, is exhibited perhaps the most extensive stock in stationery and cognate lines to be found in the United States. Heavy importations direct from France, Germany, and the British Dominions unite with the still more extensive purchases from domestic manufacturers to make it possible for the customer to procure here anything that he may require in the lines represented. Pens, paper, and envelopes in endless variety, pencils and slates by the ton, school bags and all sorts of school paraphernalia, simple games for the children, base balls and bats and foot-balls for athletes, and playing-cards and chess in many styles for the more sedate, are included in the stock here gathered together. Book-rests, hammocks, and dictionary-holders offer attractions to the comfort-seeking; while thousands of albums in leather and plush, ornamental lamps in great variety, attractive bronzes, brass goods of many sorts, and fine leather travelling-satchels and pocket-books abound for those who desire to unite utility with elegance in their purchases. A selection of these goods may be conveniently found at the stationery counter in the retail department on the first floor, near the Market Street entrance to the store.

Taken all in all, it may confidently be premised that J. B. Lippincott Company, with the advantages of its honorable reputation, its splendid working plant, and its excellent business connections, will for years, perhaps for generations, exist to do honor to the name of its noted founder.

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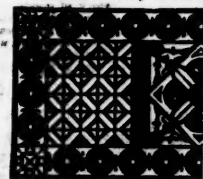
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FIG. 1.

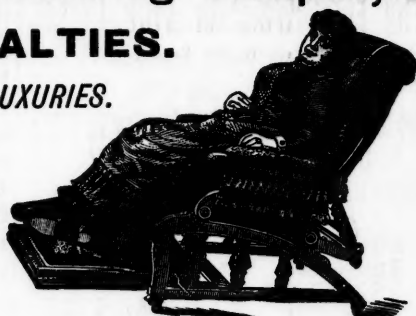


FIG. 2.

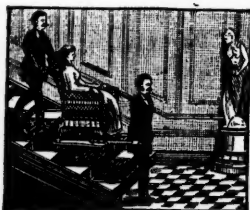


FIG. 3.

Figs. 1 and 2.—*Sargent's Monarch Reclining Chair.* As an ordinary easy-chair or for invalids' use it is the finest Reclining Chair in the world. Over 300 positions. Prices, \$50 to \$125. We have also a great variety of other styles of Reclining Chairs from \$10 up.

Fig. 3.—*Sargent's Carrying Chairs.* The occupant can be comfortably carried up and down stairs. Prices, \$10 to \$25.

Fig. 4.—*Sargent's Rolling Chairs.* We represent but two of the largest assortment and the best make in the world. Prices, \$16 to \$100.



FIG. 4.

Fig. 5.—*Sargent's Invalids' Beds.* To form a correct idea of its completeness, you should send for our Catalogue.

Fig. 6.—*Sargent's Solid Comfort Back Rest and Folding Bed Tray.* These are, indeed, of inestimable value in the sick-room. Prices: *Back Rests*, No. 1, plain, \$4; No. 2, with arms, \$5; No. 3, with head rests, \$5; No. 4, with both arms and head rests, \$6. *Trays*, No. 1, 15x25 inches, \$3; No. 2, 17x28 inches, \$4—in black walnut or ash. Mahogany \$1 extra.

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Fig. 8.—*Sargent's Sanitary Commode.*

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FIG. 7.



FIG. 8.



FIG. 6.



FIG. 9.



FIG. 10.



FIG. 11.



FIG. 12.  
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UTILITY  
Adjustable-Folding Table.  
PRICE, \$5 UP.  
20



FIG. 13.



FIG. 14.



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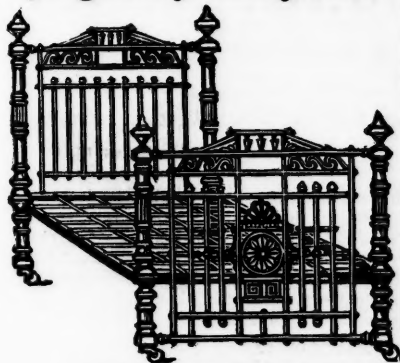
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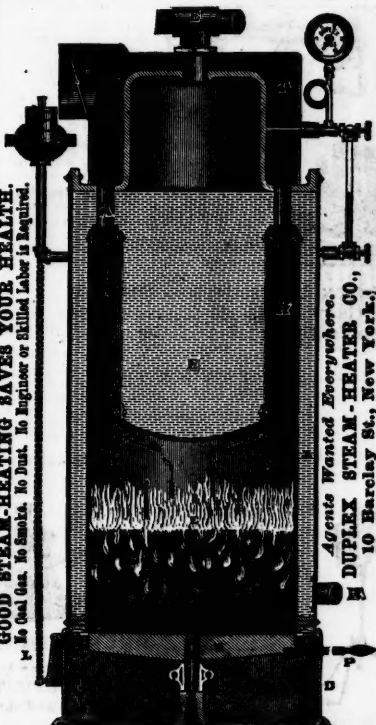


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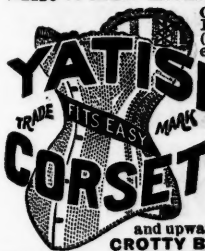
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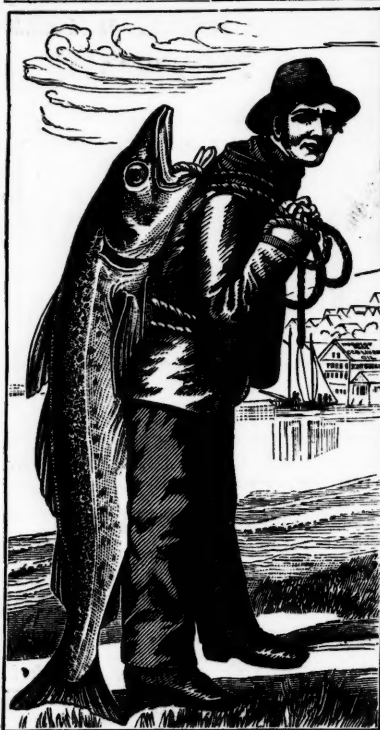
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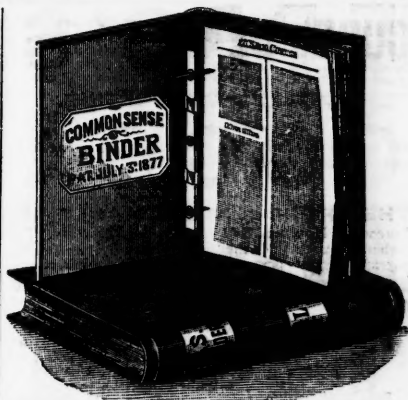
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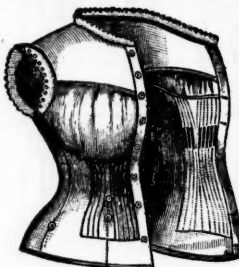
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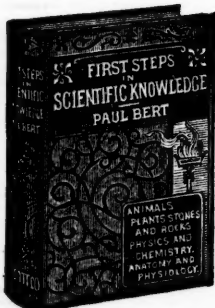
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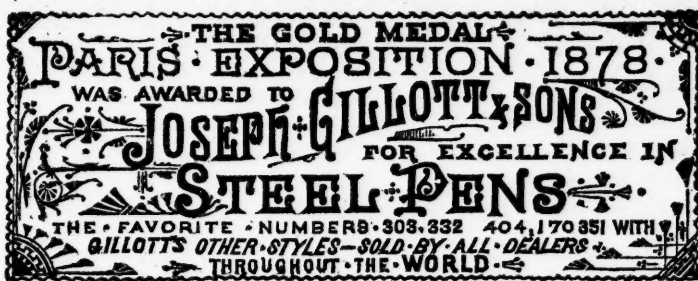
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